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**SOME CULTURAL ASPECTS OF  
MUSLIM RULE IN INDIA**



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# Some Cultural Aspects of Muslim Rule in India

BY

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*"The Mughal Empire from Babar to Aurangzeb"*

*"Education in Muslim India"* and

*"Medieval India under*

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*etc.*

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HIS EXCELLENCY  
**SIR GEORGE CUNNINGHAM**  
K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., O.B.E., I.C.S.  
GOVERNOR  
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## PREFACE

The enduring contributions of Islam to the cultural heritage of India and the constructive work done by Muslim Kings in this country are subjects seldom spoken of and rarely referred to in the existing historical literature on the Muslim Period of Indian history. Unfortunately enough, "*The Cultural Heritage of India*", recently published in three bulky volumes, dealing with almost every phase of Hindu life and thought and incorporating the contributions of over one hundred Hindu scholars, contains but one small chapter on '*Islamic Culture*', written by a Muslim writer. The worst of all is that no Muslim statesman or scholar has seriously turned his attention towards this subject. Of late, the demand for the preservation of Islamic culture has been great, but no organized literary effort has so far been launched to achieve the object. The natural result is that both Islam and Muslim Rule in India have been grossly misrepresented. The need for a cultural history of Muslim India has never been so urgent as in these days, and it was to fill this long-felt want—a want which would have been very aptly filled if "*The Cultural Heritage of India*" had been compiled on truly national lines—that I have ventured to put before the public the results of my researches that have long awaited publication.

I do confess that I have not been able to do full justice to the subjects dealt with in this book, but I must say that an undertaking to give within the compass of a small volume a complete panorama of Muslim Rule in India—its achievements in the arts of peace and its contributions to the cultural heritage of India—is impossible for one man, however gifted and competent, and that the task cannot be successfully accomplished without the collaboration of a number of specialists and the crystallization

of their researches into a much bigger work. In the pages that await the reader, attention is focussed only on a few of the cultural aspects of Muslim Rule, *viz.*, the State, the Administrative System, Toleration Education, Fine Arts, Social Life, Religious Influences and Economic Development—aspects which to my mind appear to be sufficient to reveal the refined side of a rule or ruler. Pending compilation of the bigger work, for which this book is of course a poor substitute, I shall try to improve upon it in its subsequent editions, should they be called for. For the present, I shall deem myself amply rewarded if this effort proves useful to a certain extent and paves the way for further researches on the subject which is so interesting and instructive and yet so sadly neglected.

At the end I must acknowledge the deep debt of gratitude I owe to the contemporary chroniclers and modern writers whose works I have consulted in preparing this book, to the Hon'ble Mr. J. Almond, Bar-at-Law, I. C. S., Judicial Commissioner, North-West Frontier Province for kindly permitting me to publish it and to His Excellency Sir George Cunningham, K.C.S.I., K. C. I. E., O. B. E., I. C. S., Governor of the North-West Frontier Province, for graciously agreeing to the book being dedicated to him.

*Peshawar City,*  
*February, 1939.*

*S. M. Jaffar.*

### CORRIGENDA

Page 9 line 16 *for* parosal *read* parasol.

Page 168 line 2 *for* purificatoy *read* purificatory.

Page 175 line 5 *for* dresess *read* dresses.

Page 180 line 24 *for* danty *read* dainty.

Page 186 line 18 *for* most the *read* the most.

Page 208 line 25 *for* aproach *read* approach.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

- A. M.*<sup>2</sup> ... *Aligarh Magazine, The* (Aligarh).
- B. I. S.* ... *Bibliotheca Indica Series* of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, (Calcutta).
- Elliot* ... *History of India as told by its own Historians* translated by Sir Henry Elliot and edited by Dowson.
- Ferishta* ... *Tārikh-i-Ferishta*, translated by Briggs.
- H. S.* ... Hakluyt Society.
- I. G. I.* ... *Imperial Gazetteer of India, The*.
- J. A. S. B.* ... *Journal of the (Royal) Asiatic Society of Bengal*, (Calcutta).
- J. R. A. S.* ... *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (London).
- J. R. S. A.* ... *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, (London).
- Law* ... *Promotion of Learning in India* by N. N. Law.
- M. A. S. B.* ... *Memoirs of the (Royal) Asiatic Society of Bengal*, (Calcutta).
- M. U. J.* ... *Muslim University Journal*, (Aligarh).
- N. K. P.* ... Newal Kishor Press (Lucknow).
- P. A. S. B.* ... *Proceedings of the (Royal) Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Calcutta).

## INTRODUCTION

In almost all available books on Indian history the period of Muslim rule in India is depicted in the darkest possible colours and Muslim rulers are almost invariably described as tyrants and blood-thirsty monsters, whose unrestrained autocracy found its full expression in fanaticism — in the forcible propagation of Islām, in the persecution of the Hindūs, in the destruction of their temples and in the suppression of their genius. No avenue is left unexplored and no piece of evidence is left unexploited to show that while the rulers rolled in luxuries the ruled groaned under gross inequalities and servile conditions. Nothing can be farther from truth and no graver or more grotesque distortion or disfigurement of history can be conceived. In the ensuing pages we will examine these and various other equally false and funny charges while dealing with some of the cultural aspects of Muslim rule in India and also correct the mother-mistake — that it was a foreign rule —, for most of the mistaken views, maliciously propagated against it, have sprung up from this mistake.

There is enough in the existing literature on Indo-Islamic history to show that the Muslim kings of India were great conquerors, endowed

with uncommon military genius, but there is very little in it to convey the least idea that they were also gifted with a keen zest for social life and gentle arts and that their victories in the arts of peace were no less remarkable than their achievements in the science of war. The present is an endeavour to reveal the cultural aspects of their rule, and from the ensuing account it will be evident that they made mighty contributions to almost every department of Indian life and thought—so mighty in fact that during the *millennium* of their rule in India they worked a complete revolution in the life and thought of her people. If prosperity of the people of all classes and creeds and progress of learning and education, recognition of civic rights and universal toleration in the widest sense of the word, maintenance of law and order and even-handed distribution of justice without fear or favour, encouragement of arts and crafts, industries and commerce, unstinted appreciation of virtue and worth irrespective of the rank, race or religion of those possessing them and complete identification with the interests of the country are the true index of the intellectual and cultural advancement of a people and a correct criterion of the national character of a government, then we must pronounce the Muslim kings of India as highly civilized national rulers of India, and enough proof of this will be found in the following pages. If Bentham's conception of democracy as embodied in his statement "the greatest happiness of the greatest

number" is correct, it will be found that the aims and objects of democracy were amply achieved during the 'despotic' rule of Muslim kings, chiefly during the Mughal Period, when peace and prosperity reigned everywhere in Muslim India. And, if it is a fact that "it is through its arts that a people is known", the chapters devoted to such fine arts as architecture, sculpture, gardening, painting, poetry, music *etc.* will afford ample testimony to show what kind of people the Muslim rulers of India were and what their culture was. Political topics such as the State and the system of administration; social subjects such as slavery, status of woman, *Pardah* system, games and recreations, feasts and festivals, *etc.*; social legislation, aiming at the suppression of *Sati* and infanticide among the Hindūs and of immorality, gambling and drinking among the people in general; some of the teachings of Islām and their influence on Hindū religious thought and practice; and some economic features such as encouragement of agriculture and industries, administration of famine relief, construction of canals and wells for purposes of irrigation, *etc.* are some other subjects of interest and importance dealt with in this book in order to bring out the culture of Indian Muslim kings and their contributions to the cultural heritage of India. The achievements of Muslim kings in various departments of life may not be equal to those of their preceptors of Arabia, but they were certainly superior to those of the



contemporary crowned heads of other countries. The fact that they were able to establish their rule in a country so rich in resources and inhabited by such warlike races as the Rājputs and govern it with remarkable success for so many centuries with the co-operation and support, without offending the susceptibilities or provoking any reaction of the people over whom they ruled is a glowing tribute to the refined side of their rule and a good testimony to the national character of their government.\* It will be only when the annals of their history are stripped of the passion and prejudice of generations and purged of the communal hatred they have been stored with that their noble efforts at establishing peace and a popular government, based on the acquiescent good-will of the people of all classes and creeds, in a disturbed and caste-ridden country, will be appreciated and their real place in history determined. While reading through the account that awaits the reader it will be fair to bear in mind the fact that mountains had not yet been tunnelled, the globe had not yet been girdled, space had not yet been conquered — science, in short, had not yet achieved its victories — when Muslim kings ruled in India.

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\*We shall have the occasion to refer to this question again at the end of the book. See CONCLUSION where it has been dealt with under the heading "*Was Muslim Rule in India a Rule of Foreigners?*" Also see *The Mughal Empire From Babar To Aurangzeb*, pp. 387—89.

## CHAPTER I

### THE STATE

We begin with the institution of Indo-Islamic State, but before proceeding with it we consider it necessary to explain the terms *Sultān* and *Sultānat* and *Bādshāh* and *Bādshāhat*, which have been so frequently used in the history books on the Muslim Period and to which we shall refer time and again in this volume. The words *Sultān* and *Sultānat* are derived from a common root, *Salat*, which means to prevail, to exercise authority, to possess dominion *etc.* Thus, while the word *Sultān* may be taken to mean one who wields authority, *i. e.*, monarch, the word *Sultānat* may be interpreted as monarchy or monarchical State. Both the words are used in regard to that form of government or State which came into existence in the Islamic World after the abdication of *Imām* Hasan, the fifth *Khalifa* of Islām, but which was contemplated neither by the *Qur-ān* nor by the Apostle. In this book the terms *Sultān* and *Sultānat* are used to represent the early Muslim rulers of India and their kingdom or State, while the terms *Bādshāh* (king) and *Bādshāhat* (kingdom) are employed to mean the Mughal emperors and their empire

respectively.\* Far from theocracy, the Sultānat and the Bādshāhat of Delhi were essentially secular institutions, based not on Islamic law (*Shariyat*) but on Persian traditions. This momentous change from the theocratic government (*Khilāfat* or Caliphate) of the *Qur-ān* to absolute monarchy (Sultānat or Bādshāhat) was very largely due to the influx of Persian ideas into Muslim society and hence to Persian influence. In order to understand and appreciate the acts and administrations of the Sultāns and the Bādshāhs of India, it is necessary to make a short reference to those of the Persian traditions which exerted an appreciable influence on Islām and its institutions.

The political or territorial expansion of the Commonwealth of Islām went  
 Persian influence.      apace and the standards of Islām,  
                                  bearing the emblem of crescent,  
 were carried far and wide by the Musalmāns under the ennobling influence of their religion. With the conquest of Persia and the transfer of the seat of government to Baghdād, Persian ideas and ideals began to flow fast into the rank

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\* The early Muslim rulers of India styled themselves as *Sultāns* and hence their kingdom and the form of government under them are called *Sultānat*; while [the Mughal emperors preferred the designation of *Bādshāh* and hence the name of their kingdom and the form of their government *Bādshāhat*. The terms *Sultān* and *Bādshāh* and *Sultānat* and *Bādshāhat* are essentially one in their meaning and differ little from each other in their significance.

and file of the followers of Islām, changing their spiritual outlook into one material. Coming into close contact with the Persians, the Denizens of the Desert, as the Arabs are significantly called, took an extraordinary fancy to the ideas of the former. The conquerors were literally conquered by the culture of the conquered people.\* They took such a fancy to the culture of the Persians that in their eager fascination for it they did not even pause to pick and choose from Persian ideas but assimilated them wholesale in almost every department of administration and in every aspect of their social life. Politically, they adopted the principles of Persian government—the division and organization of the various departments of the State, including their names, the personality of the Persian king, his seraglio, his slaves, his servants; State ceremonials and all other symbols of sovereignty, including his dress, the rules of military organization and equipment, the tactics of war and even the titles and designations of the rank and file—in fact every minute detail of administration. Socially, they imbibed the ideas of the Persians about social pleasures and pastimes and borrowed from them the chase, chess and *Chaugān* (polo), drinking, music and songs and even the spring festival of *Nauroz*. Culturally, they made Persian their court language and took over almost all Persian ideas, including *Ta'bīr* or the science of interpreting dreams. Of all these ideas, the most important

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\* *Vide J.A.S.B.* (1935), Vol. I, pp. 127 ff.

and significant from the present (*i.e.*, political) point of view was the theory of divine right, the most distinctive feature of Persian monarchy, which may be referred to at some length. In relation to his subjects, the Persian monarch 'was their lord and master, absolute disposer of their lives, liberties, and property; the sole foundation of law and right, incapable himself of doing wrong, irresponsible, irresistible—a sort of god upon earth; one whose favour was happiness, at whose frown men trembled, before whom all bowed themselves down, with the lowest and humblest obeisance.' Obviously, Islām, which militates against despotism and preaches perfect democracy, could not be reconciled to this naked exposition of despotism, least of all to the divinity of a mortal, the mainstay of despotic rule. But the position was somewhat simplified when the virtue of divinity was associated not with the person of the monarch but with the office he occupied. From Baghdād these ideas of kingship travelled into Ghaznīn, as also to other parts of the world, and thence made their way into India with the march of Musalmāns into that country.

India, an ancient country like Persia, offered a most favourable field for the cultivation of such ideas. Here the submissiveness of the people and the ancient traditions of the country furnished a most congenial atmosphere for the establishment of absolute monarchy.

Privileges and  
powers of Indo-  
Muslim King.

The Muslim king had before him the precedents of Persian monarchs and the examples of Indian Rājas of old, to whom divine honours were paid by their subjects. The prerogatives he enjoyed included the royal titles, the *Khutba*, the *Sikka* and certain other symbols of sovereignty to distinguish him from the rest of the people. Whenever he went out, he was accompanied by a grand procession and surrounded with dazzling splendour. The overt acts of sovereignty, which proclaimed his accession to the throne, were the recitation of the *Khutba* or public sermon and the issue of the *Sikka* or coins in his name. Among other symbols of sovereignty may be mentioned the crown and the throne, *Chatr* or royal parasol and *Dūrbāsh*\* or royal baton, *Sāibān* or royal canopy and *Naubat* or royal band and 'Alams or standards, bearing the emblems of 'fish and crescent', which no one could use unless specially permitted by the king. As to the extent of respect he commanded, suffice it to say that he was looked upon as 'God in human form' and hence entitled to all divine honours. People of all classes, for instance, prostrated themselves before him while he was present and when absent, they stood up at the mention of his name as a mark of respect and even bowed towards the seat of his government. Salutations

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\* The *Dūrbāsh* (meaning keep off) was a wooden staff branching at the top and plated with gold. It was used, as its name suggests, to keep the common people at a distance from the king when he appeared in public.

were offered to the vacant throne, even to the wooden sandals and quiver placed on it as symbols of sovereignty.\* The king was styled as *Zillullah* or 'shadow of God' on earth and divine honours were paid to him. It is stated that once when a curtain was drawn before Emperor Humāyūn on the occasion of a public audience, the gathering exclaimed, "Behold the illumination of the Divine Being". Akbar the Great was regarded as *Insān-i-Kāmil* or perfect man and *Sijda* was done to him.† Thus from the very nature of the case, the Sultānat (as also the Bādshāhat) of Delhi was a purely secular institution and the Sultān (as also the Bādshāh) was an absolute monarch, enjoying unlimited powers. He was bound by no law, was restricted by no rule, was subject to no ministerial check and was guided by no will other than his own. For his actions he was responsible to no earthly power and answerable to no human authority. He possessed the power of declaring war and

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\* See *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 102; and *J.A.S.B.* (1935), Vol. I, pp. 128-29.

† Akbar has been subjected to a most severe criticism for permitting *Sijda* (prostration) to be done to him. It must be remembered, however, that he was not the only king to whom *Sijda* was done. Many a king before him had received this and similar other tributes from his subjects, in India as well as in Persia. It is wholly unjust to treat his case as an isolated instance and to condemn it on this score. (See *The Mughal Empire From Bābar To Aurangzeb*, pp. 134-35).

concluding peace, appointing and dismissing civil as well as military officers, raising and remitting taxes, settling disputes, administering justice and devising and enforcing necessary measures for the protection of person and property of the people under his sway. In other words, all civil and military powers were vested in him and he was all in all.\*

All this was in theory. In practice, the facts of the case and the practical necessities of the hour set certain substantial checks to his otherwise unlimited powers, *e. g.* (1) The two main functions of the Muslim Government in India in those times were *Jahāngīrī* and *Jahāndārī* or conquest and consolidation respectively. Conquest or territorial expansion was the ruling passion of the life of almost every Indian Sultān and Bādshāh. The North conquered, the conquest of the South was contemplated and undertaken with such vigour that the invasions of the Deccan became an essential departmental head of the administration under the Sultānat as well as the Bādshāhat of Delhi. The fact that no outward expansion was possible without internal peace made it imperative for the Muslim ruler to gain the good-will of his subjects by taking real interest in their well-being before launching upon his career of conquest, and this put a reasonable check, however imperceptibly, on his wide

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\* See *J.A.S.B.* (1935) Vol. I, pp. 128 ff. : and *Mughal Kingship And Nobility*, pp. 71 ff.



powers. (2) Though the Muslim doctrine of obedience to the sovereign was a great source of strength to the Sultān and the Badshah, and was fully exploited and even wrongly applied at times, yet the obedience enjoined by the *Qur-ān* is not unqualified. If a ruler failed to perform his duties towards his subjects, he forfeited his claims to their obedience. Rebellions against unlawful sovereigns were declared lawful and were not unknown to Muslim India. The fear of revolts and revolutions, which were so frequent in those times, exercised an important check on the royal authority and the ruler tried his best to secure the greatest happiness of the greatest number. This then, implied the recognition of at least some elementary principles of civilized government, such as freedom of worship and liberty of conscience, even-handed distribution of justice, and protection of person and property of the people. (3) Though the circle of active voters was gradually narrowed down to a few of the leading men of the capital city and then to only one man, *i.e.*, the sovereign, who himself nominated his own successor and though the elective theory was thrown to the background, yet the principle of election, indicating the ultimate sovereignty of the people, was there and offered a loop-hole for removing an undesirable king. (4) In order to collect State dues without using force, it was likewise incumbent upon the king to afford protection to the people of all classes, if needs be, even against the ruling race. This too implied

some respect for the sentiments of the subjects and, therefore, a check on the power of the king. (5) In his own faith, the king might not have had a strong belief and he might have been a latitudinarian, he could not, however, help maintaining an outward show of respect for the faith of his forefathers. He could not claim exemption from the operation of the Muslim Canon Law, before which he was no better than the humblest and the poorest of his co-religionists who could, at least in theory, sue him, if aggrieved, in the court of the *Qāzī* (judge). He could not alter the Quranic law and had to bow to the decisions of *Mujtahids* on points of difference, though he often won over the corrupt *Ulamā* who turned and twisted the meaning of some verses of the sacred text to suit his requirements. But, though he could make rules and regulations consistent with the *Sharīyat*, he could not transgress it in any circumstances. This also tended to keep him within his bounds. (6) The exalted nature of the office, *i. e.*, Sultānat or Bādshāhat, surrounded as it was by a halo of divinity, necessitated strict adherence to the high standard of justice, generosity, tolerance, forgiveness, magnanimity, chivalry and a number of other virtues which, if he pursued, made his despotic rule not only possible but pleasant and popular. (7) With the march of time, the militant fury of the invader abated and the Muslim king, in course of time, came to be looked upon as a custodian of the person and property of the people and a

patron of art and literature. As such, he undertook to perform, in peaceful times, many other functions of a civilized government, *viz.*, upkeep of roads and highways, promotion of learning and education, establishment of almshouses and hospitals, encouragement of arts and industries, protection of trade and commerce, and administration of famine relief. (8) The fear of the disaffected joining the independent rulers outside the ambit of the Delhi Empire, coupled with the fear that any interference in the internal affairs of local principalities which, though subdued and reduced to the state of feudatories, were yet autonomous to all intents and purposes, would incur their hostilities, must have kept the kings well within their bounds. (9) Though, strictly speaking, there was no appreciable, automatic, regular and permanent check of a landed or feudal aristocracy or of an organized public opinion, yet the presence of a highly developed bureaucracy must have meant a most effective limitation of the autocratic authority, more so because in most cases it was neither seen nor felt. (10) Finally, the fact that almost all the rulers had undergone a regular routine of public service and that their sons and successors, in fact all the princes of the royal blood, had to serve a regular apprenticeship, would have given them an insight and experience which must have materially moderated the rigours of monarchy and considerably lightened the

theoretically absolute tone of their rule.\*

The importance of the limitations enumerated above cannot be exaggerated. Their real importance ed. They tended to establish some sort of democratic government in India by indirectly impressing upon the mind of the ruler the necessity of securing the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Many a time absolute monarchy passed through ultra-critical stages and underwent serious modifications in its form and tone; and more than once did India reach the verge of witnessing a constitutional monarchy during the pre-Mughal period: The reigns of weak rulers like Ārām, Rukn-ud-Dīn and Kaiqubād of the so called Slave Dynasty, Mubārak Shāh of the Khiljī Dynasty, Muhammad Shāh II, Humāyūn and Mahmūd of the Tughluq Dynasty, the successors of Khizr Khān, and Ibrāhīm Lodhī, so also the disturbed reigns of Muhammad Tughluq and Ibrāhīm Lodhī and the mild character of Nasīr-ud-Dīn Mahmūd of the Slave Dynasty, Jalāl-ud-Dīn Firoz of the Khiljī Dynasty and Firoz Shāh of the Tughluq Dynasty offered a most favourable field for planting a popular government in India, but no advantage was taken of these and other opportunities that presented themselves at times and hence nothing was accomplished in that direction. If a strong anti-monarchical party had

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\* *Vide J.A.S.B. Vol. I (1935) pp. 133 ff; and The Splendour That Was 'Ind, p. 204.*

been organized and if the various circumstances had been fully exploited, a change, fraught with far-reaching consequences, must have taken place. Apart from an utter lack of organization, there were some other factors which arrested and even retarded the growth of public opinion and prevented the establishment of some sort of constitutional government. These were want of appreciation, abundance of jealousies and conflicting interests, the egotism and arrogance of the nobles and the ignorance and indifference of the people in general. The Mughal emperors ruled India in a most constitutional manner and the aims and objects of democracy were almost fully achieved during their rule. (*Vide infra*).

The influence of a purely secular State on the aims and ideals of Islām and on all that it stands for was detrimental.\* The transfer of the seat of government from Medīna to Damascus with the rise of the Omayyades and the secularization of the State led to many unwholesome, inhuman and even monstrous acts. The *Shariyat* was not allowed to interfere with the State; it was, on the other hand, subordinated to and made to serve the interests of the sovereign and the State. With the fall of Madāin and the flow of wealth into the ranks of Islām, the entire outlook of its followers underwent a great change and capitalistic

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\* See *J.A.S.B.* (1935) Vol. I, pp. 126 ff.

tendencies began to dominate their minds. Some of the true sons of Islām did in fact feel agitated at this material advancement at the cost of spiritual salvation, but theirs was a voice in the wilderness. As early as the Khilāfat of *Hazrat* Usmān we notice that a faithful friend and follower of the Prophet, with whom poverty was his pride, was exiled into the desert for raising his voice against the changing state of affairs. Hussain, a grandson of the Prophet, refused to take oath of fealty to the impious Yazīd and the result was the Tragedy of Karbalā, the greatest tragedy recorded in the annals of the world.\* When the Ommayyades came to power and when the centre of gravity of the Muslim World shifted to Baghdād, the Khalīfas and the Sultāns came out as the exact prototypes of the old Persian kings. Religious requirements were relegated to the background and spiritual salvation was out of question. In India, the conquest of the country placed its resources at the disposal of the conqueror and opened up fresh opportunities for indulgence in pleasures and luxuries. Under the circumstances, there is no wonder that some of the fundamental laws of Islām were violated by the Sultānat and that in concurrence with the corrupt *Ulamā*. It must, however, be pointed out that the Sultāns were always anxious to safeguard the honour and to promote the interests of Islām as long as they

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\* For an account of this tragedy, see *A Short History of the Saracens* by S. Ameer Ali, pp. 83 ff.

did not collide or come into conflict with the State. The shrewd politicians of the age argued that the Sultānat had formulated its own laws, based on Persian traditions and Indian usages, which were different from and even opposed to those of Islām but conducive to the State. They subscribed to and propagated the theory that 'the secular state was a twin sister of the faith, only different in the nature of its functions'. Some of them went even so far as to declare that the Sultān in his own sphere was in no wise inferior to the Prophets and *Walīs* in theirs. To those who were always out to find or forge moral and religious support for the Sultānat, the Quranic injunction *Atī-ullāha wa atī-ur-Rasul wa ulil amr-i-minkum*\* i.e. "Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and obey those in authority from amongst you" was full of possibilities of ingenious interpretations, best-suited to buttress the moral claims of the Sultān. They lost no time in declaring 'He who obeys the Sultān obeys the Lord Merciful'. Little wonder if the people addressed the king as *Khudāvand-i-Alam* or Master of the Universe, an important attribute of the Almighty God. After the dismemberment of the Sultānat of Delhi these ideas flowed into the provincial kingdoms, where the local rulers represented the Delhi Sultāns in their true colours. The *Bādshāhat* was but another name of the Sultānat and the *Bādshāhs* or Mughal emperors were also absolute monarchs, perhaps more absolute than their predecessors. When Akbar the Great declared himself the

Lord spiritual as well as temporal of his subjects, whether on his own motion or encouraged by others and 'the whole country agreed to the position without much protest', it was only a logical culmination of the above developments.\*

Such, in short, was the status of the Sultān and the Bādshāh of India. Obviously enough, there was no room within the State for a Sultān or a Bādshāh to play the part of *Dīn Panāh* or Defender of the Faith. The State and the Church were united in his person; but unlike before, the latter was harnessed to the former and its interests were often subordinated to those of material well-being. Only a few kings, such as Sultān Fīroz Shāh Tughluq and Aurangzeb the Great Mughal, made some efforts to bring the State into line with the tenets of their religion; but their policy proved to be abortive, if not actually harmful, because the Hindūs did not like to be ruled in accordance with the tenets of Islām even if they were calculated to be most beneficial for them.

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\* See J. A. S. B. (1935), Vol. I, pp. 126 ff; *Mughal Kingship And Nobility*, pp. 1 ff. and 150 ff.; *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh* (Ranking), Vol. II, pp. 279-80; and *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, pp. 1 ff. It is the height of injustice to treat Akbar's case as an isolated phenomenon, for his acts were quite in keeping with or rather in continuation of the traditions of India on the one hand and of Persia on the other. (See *The Mughal Empire From Babar To Aurangzeb*, pp. 114 ff; *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh*, Vol. II, pp. 279-80; and *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 405 ff.)



The familiar custom of holding what are now called *Darbārs* (courts) had been popular in Persia from times immemorial. In India it became a permanent institution during the first fifty years of the Muslim period. The Sultāns of Delhi held *Darbārs* on a number of public occasions, such as the coronation of a monarch, the commemoration of a victory or an important event, the consummation of the marriage of a royal prince or princess, the celebration of the birth of a baby or the anniversary of a member of the royal family. This in no wise exhausts the long list of public occasions; extraordinary convocations were held when, for instance, a foreign ambassador or a distinguished guest was welcomed. There were other *Darbārs* popularly known as *Jashns*, which were held to celebrate certain social and religious festivals and were noted for pomp and pageantry, culminating in a lavish distribution of robes of honour and rewards. Nothing was spared to make each *Darbār* an occasion of unparalleled happiness. It is impossible to describe even in a bare outline the court etiquette and ceremonies observed on each occasion. The place and position of all persons, their apparel and appearance, and various rules of conduct and the ceremony of presentation to the Sultān, with its usual accompaniments of *Kornish*,\*

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\* *Kornish* is a mode of salutation in which the palm of the right hand is placed upon the forehead, and the head is bent downwards. (*J.A.S.B.*, 1935, Vol. I, p. 165).

*Taslim*\* and *Zamīnbos*,† were paid the utmost attention at each *Darbār*. While approaching His Imperial Majesty, a visitor prostrated himself at the royal feet in all humility and addressed the Emperor in a refined language, using the choicest of words at his command.‡ For assisting the Sultān in the discharge of his ceremonial functions and public duties, there was a separate staff of officials, the most prominent of whom were *Barbak* or Private Secretary, *Hajib* or Supervisor of the Ceremonies of Court Presentation, and *Vakil-i-dar* who performed the secretarial functions of the Court.§ The Mughals' fondness for pomp and show surpassed that of their predecessors. They made Court etiquette and ceremonial much more elaborate and impressive. Under Shāh Jahān the Magnificent the

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\* "The salutation, called *Taslim*, consists in placing the back of the right hand on the ground, and then raising it gently till the person stands erect, when he puts the palm of his hand upon the crown of his head, which pleasing manner of salutation signifies that he is ready to give himself as an offering"—*Ain-i-Akhbari*.

† *Zamīnbos* (literally, kissing the ground) was a mode of salutation, in which a person approaching royal presence bowed his forehead to the ground and then proceeded towards the throne, making low obeisance three times at regular intervals in obedience to the calls of the *Naqib*. (*J.A.S.B.*, 1935, Vol. I, p. 165; and *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, pp. 102, 135-36).

‡ For some more information on the subject (i.e. court etiquette) *vide J. A. S. B.*, 1935, Vol. I, pp. 164 ff.

§ For a list of these and other officers and their duties see *J. A. S. B.*, 1935, Vol. I, pp. 167-69.

Mughal Court presented a most picturesque scene. Imagine him gracefully dressed in jewelled robes, worked with gold threads, majestically sitting under a canopy on the famous Peacock Throne, with its 'tail blazing in the shifting natural colours of rubies, sapphires and emeralds', placed on a marble platform in the *Diwān-i-Khās*, itself a veritable paradise on earth, where the Princes of the royal blood and the grandees of the Empire occupied their allotted seats and where a number of decently dressed pages (*Ghilmāns*) stood and waited for orders, and granting an audience or receiving a foreign embassy or presiding over some important function and you will get but a glimpse of the glory of that great Court. So perfect in short was the splendour that surrounded the Sovereign and his Court that even the eyes most accustomed to the pomp of Paris were dazzled at the sight. Whether this impressive display of pomp and power was in any way conducive to the growth of culture may be open to question, but it is an admitted fact that this spectacular glamour had an irresistible hold on the imagination of the people and that the countries claiming to be most advanced in modern civilization have found it impossible to do without it. The present rulers of India have adopted most of the Court ceremonial of their predecessors — the Great Mughals — for the simple reason that they understand that it has an undeniable psychological effect on the minds of the masses, that it has a much greater appeal in the East than in

the West. Rulers of Indian States, both Hindūs and Muslims, have retained it because they have a peculiar fancy for it. The custom of *Naghmasarāī* (music) and *Qasidakhānī* (recitation of laudatory odes) is still an important feature of *Darbārs* in Indian States, where poets and musicians of renown come from distant places to sing praises of the ruling prince and to receive rewards according to their merits, and instances are not wanting to show that even in British India *Qasīdas* (panegyrics) are recited in honour of Viceroy and Governors.\* Similarly the *Jashn* (Independence Day) attracts a number of musicians and others to Kābul in Afghānistān from India and other places every year.

In Muslim India there was no recognized law determining the succession to the throne. Often the rulers were elected, though the number of voters was gradually reduced to a few persons only. Sometimes the ruling prince nominated his own successor and the choice frequently fell on the eldest son. There are also instances when the sword decided the question of succession to the throne. In the absence of a definite law of succession, the rival claimants and influential chiefs were not slow in setting up their claims and fishing in troubled waters if

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\* See *J.R.S.A.* (January, 1936), p. 239; and *J.A.S.B.* (1935), Vol. I, pp. 162 ff.

fortune favoured and means were not lacking. In such cases the sword settled the struggle for succession and the fittest of the contestants survived to rule the kingdom. There is no doubt that the absence of the law of succession spelt civil war and bloodshed, but the advantage underlying it cannot escape recognition, for in the civil war that followed the death of a ruler only the ablest claimant defeated his opponents and succeeded in securing the throne for himself, and history is a witness that he ruled the kingdom with remarkable insight and acumen.\*

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\* See *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration, and Mughal Kingship And Nobility*, which contain a good deal of useful information on the subject. It may be noted here that unfortunately the early history of Islām too did not furnish a better precedent: "Muhammad had often indicated 'Alī as his successor, but laid down no definite rule". On his death Abū Bakr was 'hastily elected to the office of Khalīfa'. Before Abū Bakr died he 'nominated 'Umar as his successor in the Caliphate'. 'Umar in his turn entrusted the selection of his successor to six notables of Medīna and the result was the election of Usmān. On the tragic death of Usmān, 'Alī was proclaimed Khalīfa and after his assassination his son, Hasan, was elected Khalīfa by universal suffrage. Hasan had to abdicate in favour of the rebellious Muāwiyā who, before his death, managed to instal his son, Yazīd, as his successor in contravention of his treaty with Hasan, according to which he was to rule for life-time and then the Khilāfat was to devolve upon Hasan's younger brother, Hussain. Evidently there was no definite rule regulating the succession to the throne. (*Vide A Short History of the Saracens*, pp 21, 27, 45, 49, 70-71 and 81. Also see *Islam in the World*, pp. 67 ff. and *The Caliphate*, pp. I. ff.)

## CHAPTER II

### ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

We have briefly dealt with the broad features of the Muslim State and the nature of Muslim Monarchy. We now propose to devote some space to the administrative system in vogue during that period. But it must be acknowledged at the outset that it is not possible to trace within the scope of a small chapter the evolution of a system to which full justice cannot be done even in a separate volume. We must, therefore, content ourselves with a brief description of some of the most important features of that system — the division of the Empire into parts for purposes of effective control, maintenance of law and order, administration of justice, development of means of communication and transportation, encouragement of arts and education,\* administration of famine relief, postal service, land revenue system, and taxation—, and with their criticism in order to see how far the system was suited to the spirit of the age and the sentiments of the

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\* *Toleration, Education and Fine Arts* have been dealt with in separate chapters because special importance attaches to them in that they afford an excellent touchstone for testing the tastes and temperament of a ruler and revealing him in his true colours.

subject races, and how far it reflected the refined side of Muslim Rule in India.

The Empire was divided into a number of provinces, each of which was usually known by the name of the country or its capital. A province was, therefore, the biggest administrative division. It was placed in charge of a trusted officer who acted as the viceroy of the king in it. Each viceroy employed a large number of subordinate officials for the effective administration of his province. His powers, like those of the king, were great in his own sphere. Imperial matters, such as declaring war and making peace, were outside the ambit of his authority. Each province was parcelled into numerous small divisions called *Parganas*,\* which were entrusted to *Faujdārs* and *Shiqdārs*, who carried on the executive and revenue affairs respectively. A *Pargana*, consisting of several villages, was the effective unit of administration. In the discharge of their duties, the *Faujdārs* and *Shiqdārs* were assisted by a number of lesser officials, such as *Muqaddams* (village head-men),

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\* There were also such divisions as *Shiq*, *Khita* or *Iqtā'*, which may be said to have corresponded to the later *Sarkārs*. The term *Sarkār* (district) is supposed to have been introduced by the Sūrs, though there is no clear evidence to prove it except that it does not appear in the earlier works written before the rise of the Sūrs. It corresponded to our modern district and consisted of several *Parganas*.

*Qānūngos, Kārkins, Navīsindas etc.* A *Dīwān* was stationed at each province and entrusted with the task of collecting the land revenue and remitting it to the Central Government. There existed a regular rivalry between the *Dīwān* and the Viceroy and the points of dispute between them were referred to and decided by the Sovereign.\*

There were no such courts of law and justice as exist in these days; there were no court-fees, no pleaders, no such legal formalities as a litigant has to observe in these days and consequently there were no such inconveniences as surround the law courts now extant. The king was the fountain of justice and his was the highest court of appeal. At times the king and the provincial governors also heard appeals and often revised, modified, upheld or set aside the decisions of lower courts. Evidence, both oral and documentary, was taken on the spot after administering oaths to the witnesses and the cases were decided on the spot. The *Qāzī*† settled the cases among the Musalmāns in accordance with the *Shariyat*, and civil disputes relating to inheritance, succession, *etc.*, among the Hindūs were allowed to be decided by

\* *Medieval India*, by Ishwari Prasad, and *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*.

† For other judicial officers and their duties, *vide* *Mughal Kingship And Nobility*, pp. 143 ff; and *The Mughal Empire From Babar To Aurangzeb*, pp. 148-49.



Hindū judges or *Panchāyats* (juries), while those between Hindūs and Muslims were decided by Muslim judges assisted by Brahmans, accomplished in Hindū law. The justice dealt out was rough and ready, simple and cheap but was apt to miscarry. The Muslim kings were noted for their impartiality in judicial matters. Punishments inflicted were rather severe, too severe to stand comparison with those meted out in these days, but were best-suited to those times in that they served as effective deterrents.\*

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\* On the authority of some European travellers who visited India during the Mughal Period some modern writers have frequently referred to the vanity of the Qāzīs and the corruption of other Government officials. I have found no occasion to agree with them, though I do not deny the charge altogether. Corruption there was no doubt, but it must be remembered that it was neither condoned nor connived at by the Government. On the other hand, it was strongly suppressed and severely chastised. To be fair, no government, however advanced and efficient, can claim to be free from corrupt officials even in our own times and the Muslim Government could be no exception to the rule. Notwithstanding the efficient systems of administration evolved by different progressive nations and the deterrents devised by them, there is corruption and corruption in plenty in every country and in almost every department, at least among the ministerial staff. In Muslim India, we gather from the original sources of information, every effort was made to remove it and, in consequence, there was in those days a good balance of justice and fair-dealing, better than any other country could claim. (*Vide The Mughal Empire From Babar To Aurangzeb*, pp. 43, 58-59, 148-49, 180-81, 274, 371-72, 382-83; *Mughal Kingship And Nobility*, pp. 126 ff; and *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 446-49.)

Many Muslim kings were sincerely interested in the social as well as moral well-being of their subjects, irrespective of the sects to which they belonged or the creeds they professed. They forbade drinking and gambling and tried their best to suppress immorality. For this purpose they appointed *Mohhtasibs* or censors of public morals and charged them with the duty of seeing that the people behaved well and did not resort to immoral pursuits. Under their directions *Zakat* was properly organized and a *Bait-ul-Mal* (Public Treasury) was created and worked with great efficiency. The horrible and inhuman practices of *Sati*\* and infanticide, which had

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\*Muhammad Tughluq was perhaps the first Muslim king of India who raised his voice against this abominable practice of burning a living widow with her dead husband and tried to suppress it. (*A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 145 and 253-54). Ibn Batuta informs us that the Delhi Sultāns had made it compulsory to obtain a license before burning a widow within the Sultanat. The idea seems to have been to discourage the use of force. (*J. A. S. B.*, 1935, Vol. I, p. 260). Humāyūn, the second Mughal Emperor, took a bold step against it and tried to extirpate it altogether, but did not go far enough. (*J. A. S. B.*, 1935, Vol. I, p. 260). Akbar the Great prohibited it and never suffered an unwilling widow to be burnt alive with her dead husband. (*The Mughal Empire From Babar To Aurangzeb*, p. 88 ; and *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 388-89). 'Alamgīr also issued an edict against it. (See *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, p. 636). It may be pointed out here that this was done despite the fact that Muslim kings were

eaten into the foundations of Hindū society, were systematically discouraged and forbidden and widow-remarriage was legalized.

The government was carried on under the obvious disadvantage of slow Postal Service and imperfect means of communication and transportation, notwithstanding the fact that almost all Muslim kings of India were deeply interested in the upkeep of imperial highways. The principal roads linking the capital cities and strategic parts of the kingdom, lined with shady trees and punctuated with *serāis*, equipped with wells, gardens etc., served the purposes of postal service. Along the Imperial highways were posted foot-runners or horsemen who carried the Imperial dispatches from place to place. During the period under review a fairly regular and efficient postal system was in force.\*

The Muslim kings maintained a well-organized police force in order Police Force. to enforce law and order and to facilitate impartial dissemination of justice. The *Kotwāl*, or the policeman-in-chief, was the custodian of public peace and security. In the

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most reluctant in interfering with the established and deep-seated practices and prejudices of their Hindū and other non Muslim subjects.

\* See *The Mughal Empire From Bābar To Aurangzeb*, pp. 22, 61, 150 and 385; and *Tavernier's Travels*, Vol. I, p. 233.

discharge of his multifarious duties he was assisted by a staff of subordinate officers. If order and security prevailed in the cities, if business was safe, if roads were well-guarded and if foreign merchants were well protected, it was mainly due to the existence of a well organized police.\*

Espionage has no doubt a bad odour about it, but as it has been found indispensable, especially in despotic governments, it has been frequently resorted to even by the most civilized states. The Muslim kings maintained a regular army of spies who kept them in touch with all the events that took place throughout the length and breadth of their empire. In order that no secret might leak out, there existed a close connection between the Postal System and the Secret Service.

Government Service was not the monopoly of the ruling race. It was open to all—Hindūs and Muslims—who possessed the required qualifications. At first there appears to have been some prejudice against the employment of natives in high posts on the executive side of civil administration, but this too vanished with the march of time. Sultāns such as Alā-ud-Dīn Khiljī and Muhammad Tughluq employed a

\* *The Mughal Empire From Babar To Aurangzeb*, pp 58, 152 and 384; and *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 337-38.

number of Hindūs in the service of the State. Muslim armies of India were invariably soldiered and officered with Indians — Hindūs and Muslims alike.\* The Mughals made no invidious distinction between the Hindūs and Muslims, both of whom they regarded as their subjects. They freely employed Hindūs in the service of the State, appointed them to important posts and entrusted them with positions involving great responsibility. They not only appreciated and rewarded merit from whatever sources it emanated, but tried their best to secure the services of the best brains of India, irrespective of caste, colour or creed. In the words of a Hindū writer: "Hindūs were eligible for even the highest and most responsible of posts. They were allowed to have their own social and religious systems, with freedom of worship and full rights of citizenship. Officers and soldiers, and statesmen and public servants were recruited without any distinction of caste, colour or creed".† Even Aurangzeb, who was so much harassed by the Hindūs and who has been painted as a bigot and fanatic by most of the modern writers, did not dispense with their services notwithstanding the fact that they had declared themselves against him and had

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\* *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, p. 145; J.A.S.B. (1935) Vol. I, p. 179, and Professor Muhammad Habib's article in *The Aligarh Magazine* (October-December, 1931) pp. 4-5.

† *Mughal Kingship And Nobility*, p. 203.

betrayed him on a number of occasions.\* "Government posts", he said, "ought to be bestowed according to ability and from no other consideration". That he was true to this "supreme law of toleration for a ruler of people of another faith" as Sir Thomas Arnold rightly calls it, is testified to by the fact that there were many Hindūs who held such important posts under him as those of governors, commanders and *Diwāns*—posts which no government has ever bestowed on the sons of the subjugated soil. If a certain number of Hindū clerks were dismissed, it was because they were incorrigibly corrupt.†

The question of famine relief next engages our attention. On the whole, the economic condition of the people of that period was quite good. Prices were very low, sometimes exceptionally so. But famines were frequent, for Indian agriculture has, after all, been rightly described as a gamble in rains. How were famines fought in those days? Let us see. During the days of famine the State helped the poor and the needy by opening alms-houses and hospitals as well as by supplying

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\* *Vide Aurangzeb And His Times*, pp. 190 ff; *The Mughal Empire From Babar To Aurangzeb*, pp. 294-95; *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, Vol. II, pp. 51 ff.

† *Ahkām-i-'Alamgiri*, Hukm 39; *The Mughal Empire From Babar To Aurangzeb*, p. 295; *The Preaching of Islam*, p. 214; *Mughal Kingship And Nobility*, pp. 221-22; and *Aurangzeb And His Times*, pp. 150 ff.

grains *gratis* from Government granaries, and remitting or reducing the land revenue. To prevent the actual occurrence of famines, the State advanced loans to the poor peasants and thus enabled them to purchase the elementary means of production, sunk wells and opened canals for purposes of irrigation, and facilitated migration for relieving congestion and distress. The reigns of Sultan 'Alā-ud Dīn Khiljī, Ghiyās-ud-Dīn Tughluq, Muhammad Tughluq and Firoz Tughluq witnessed the evolution of all the modern methods of fighting famines and the growth of all the essentials of a sound famine policy. The first-named adopted two important measures: 'controlling of market prices and profiteering and storing of grain in large quantities in the State granaries with a view to relieve distress in the times of need'. Ghiyās-ud-Dīn Tughluq introduced the idea of opening canals and actually established a minor work. His successor, Muhammad Tughluq, carried the policy a step further when he made liberal advances to the impoverished to provide them with the necessary means of cultivation and ordered the sinking of wells and the distribution of food-stuffs. By opening canals and extending the area of cultivation, Firoz Tughluq completed what may be called the famine policy of the Sultānat of Delhi. When a serious famine broke out during his reign, Sikandar Lodhī went so far as to abolish *Zakāt* on grains with a view to obtain a better supply of grains at less price. Sher Shāh Sūrī, who was fully alive to

the horrors of famines, was no less anxious to obviate the sufferings of his subjects when they actually broke out. In one of his *firmāns* he said, "if scarcity of rains destroys the crops of the year, it is necessary that the poor should be helped with money from the treasury so that as far as the resources of the State permit they might be saved from the whirlpool of destruction". The Mughal Emperors' solicitude for the welfare of their subjects cannot be called in question. They encouraged agriculture and promoted the well-being of the peasantry by introducing a number of beneficial agrarian measures. But famines were not unknown to Mughal India. Whenever famines broke out, the Mughal Emperors left no resources unexploited for mitigating its horrors. They spent *lākhs* of rupees in affording relief to the famine-stricken by opening alms-houses, kitchens and hospitals and arranging free distribution of food.

In the administration of famine relief the work of the State was supplemented very substantially by such charitable institutions as *khānqāhs*. History is a witness that hundreds of poor persons were fed free at the *khānqāhs* and mosques. The testimony of foreign travellers also corroborates this fact and the fact that the Muslim kings spared nothing in combating the calamity or at least in mitigating its horrors. The State was indeed alive to its duty, yet the horrors of famines were alarming because the inventions that brought into



existence such swift and sound means of communication as steamers and railways were yet in the womb of the future.\*

As the Muslim kings of India belonged to the Hanafī School, they followed Taxation. the principles of taxation propounded by the Hanifites, though at times they cast these principles to the corner and collected taxes arbitrarily. The two main sources of income according to Muslim jurists were *Fa'y* and *Zakāt*, the former being a secular source and the latter a religious one. The main head, *Fa'y*, included such taxes as *Khums*, *Jizīa* and *Khiraāj*; whereas *Zakāt* comprised taxes on flocks and herds, commercial capital, gold and silver and agricultural produce. The sub-heads enumerated above included all such articles as were subject to *Shari'* taxation. *Khums*, meaning 1/5th, was a tax levied on the war-booty acquired by Muslim soldiers and on a mine or a treasure discovered by one or more persons. It was so called because it was fixed at 1/5th. If, however, the booty or the treasure were discovered without any effort, the rule of 1/5th did not apply and the whole of it was shared by the entire Muslim community. *Jizīa* was levied from the *Zimmīs* and in

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\* *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, pp. 277-9, 288-9, 293, 302, 305-6, and 325; *Tārīkh-i-Firoz Shāhi*, by Barni (B. I. S.) pp. 482, 483, 489-9; *Travels of Ibn Batuta*, p. 203; Elliot, Vol. VII, pp. 24-25, and *The Mughal Empire From Babar To Aurangzeb*, pp. 404-5.

return for it they received protection of life and property and exemption from military service. It was levied from the *Zimmīs* directly within the Delhi Empire only in times of financial stringency. Barring out two or three cases, it was not levied throughout the Muslim Period\*. *Khirāj* was a land tax, which ranged between  $1/2$  to  $1/5$ . It was collected from both Muslims and non-Muslims and was a most paying tax. *Zakāt* was a religious tax and was collected from those who possessed free property and who were in a position to understand its significance. Infants, invalids, insolvents, debtors, lunatics and non-Muslims were outside the ambit of its operation. It was not levied on the property that was below the *Nisāb* or taxable minimum, nor on the necessities of life, such as clothes, food and houses. Animals were taxed, but not all of them were subject to taxation. Mules and donkeys were taxed when intended for sale. With regard to the taxing of horses, the opinion is divided. According to some, horses were subject to taxation, while others exempted them from being taxed. The *Nisāb* for camels was fixed at five, for bulls, cows and buffaloes at thirty, for sheep and goats at forty, for gold it was twenty *Misqāls* and for silver two hundred *Dirhams*. Normally, the articles of trade were not taxed if their value was less

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\* *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, pp. 338 ff.; *The Mughal Empire From Babar To Aurangzeb*, pp. 65, 88, 292-4, 314 and 383; *Aurangzeb And His Times*, pp. 110 ff.; and *The Encyclopædia Britannica*.

than forty *Dirhams* and in some cases even less than two hundred *Dirhams*. 'Ushr (tithe) was also an important tax. Unlike *Khirāj*, which was levied on the actual productivity of the soil, the 'Ushr was levied on the actual produce thereof. Being a religious *Farz* or obligation, it was levied only from the Musalmāns. It was subject to the principle of the *Nisāb*. Its special feature is that it does not exempt minors, lunatics and *Waqfs*. It was levied on such articles as wheat, barley, rice, millet, lentils, maize, beans, peas, and species of similar genus. The rate of this tax in the case of lands irrigated by rain or running water and wild fruits was 1/10th, while for the lands watered by artificial means of irrigation it was half of it. According to the Hanafī School, it was levied only on the produce of the 'Ushr land and not on the *Khirāj* land. The two taxes, *Khirāj* and 'Ushr, according to the same school, could not be levied simultaneously.\*

The revenue system under the so-called Slave Kings of India was based on that of the Ghaznawids and Ghorids. They distributed tracts of the conquered territory among their followers and officials. The areas of land thus granted were known as *Iqtā's* and those

Revenue Sys-  
tem under the  
Sultanat.

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\* See *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, pp. 338 ff.; and *The Mughal Empire From Babar To Aurangzeb*, p. 383.

who held them were called *Muqta's*. The *Iqtā's* were usually given to military men, collectively called *Ahl-i-Jaish*, for a period of time or for life and were not hereditary. They could be revoked by the Emperor at any time. It was probably for this reason that they were generally granted from the *Khirāj* land. Each *Muqta'* or *Iqtā'*-holder was expected to collect the revenue due on it, deduct from it the amount assigned to him and remit the balance to the Central Government. According to law, if the revenue realized from an *Iqtā'* fell short of the share of its holder (*Muqta'*), he could not claim the deficit from the Central Government. This was in order to prevent the possibility of corruption on the part of the *Muqta'*. But the evil which the law drove out from the front door re-entered from the back one; for the *Muqta'* always tried to square up the revenue from his *Iqtā'* with the amount of his share and attempted to get some surplus over and above so as to be able to fight a lean year. Naturally enough, the *Muqta'* made the best of his opportunities and tried to conceal the real revenue realized from his *Iqtā'*. Thus the evil that was driven out by law set in again, for the Central Government still suspected him; and whereas he could not claim deficits from it in cases of decreases in the revenue from the *Iqtā'*, he could collect from his *Iqtā'* more than was actually due and conceal the surplus. Another class of land was called *Khalsa* or *Mumlikat*. It was the property of the State and was probably managed through the agency of *'Amils*.

The Central Government reserved the right of determining the scales of revenue for this class of land. Yet another class of land was that which was allowed to remain in possession of its original owner on the promise of paying tribute. Lands were also given as *Milk* and *Inām*, but they do not concern us here, for no revenue was derived from them. The principal revenue officials were *Muqta's*, *Muqaddams*, *Mulasarrafs*, *Khots*, *Kārkuhs*, *Chaudharis*, *'Amils* and *Patwāris*. The State demand of the land revenue was usually fixed at  $\frac{1}{3}$ , but 'Alā-ud-Dīn raised it to  $\frac{1}{2}$ . The justification for this increase lay in the need of the hour and in the remarkable efficiency of the army which was indispensable for maintaining law and order as well as for national defence. He was the first Muslim king of India who insisted on the actual measurement of land and on the realization of land revenue on the basis of actual cultivation. He introduced a number of revenue reforms and made the system fairly efficient. Measurement of land, division of crops, payment in cash or kind, examination of *Patwāri's* papers — all these things were known to his government. Sultān Ghiyās-ud-Dīn Tughluq carried the land revenue policy of the Sultānat of Delhi a step further by recognizing the principle of making due allowance for droughts and damages to land or crops. He is also said to have charged only  $\frac{1}{10}$ th of the gross produce as the share of the State. This seems to be an exaggeration, for the land revenue was the most important

source of income and no Sultān could afford to allow it to fall as low as that. Another equally important contribution made by him to the revenue system was making *Hāsil* (actual produce or turnover) the basis of the State demand. This was a very wise and equitable step in that it encouraged systematic survey of the land under cultivation and did away with the defects of the figures based on the traditional assessment and guess-work without taking into account the fluctuations in prices and produce during a particular period. Ghiyās-ud-Dīn was also the first king of India who thought of opening canals for purposes of irrigation and is stated to have done some minor work on a small scale, but it was left for Firoz Tughluq to take up the question and to make it an important part of his programme. The two canals which he opened, *viz.*, *Rājīva* and *Alaghkhānī*, irrigated "a tract of land covering at least one hundred and sixty miles". After the death of Firoz Tughluq the Sultānat of Delhi suffered a rude shock. The disturbances in the Capital, the rebellions of Muslim and Hindū Chiefs outside and the invasion of Amīr Timūr brought the Turkish Rule to a sad close and made it impossible for the Sayyads, who succeeded to the Sultānat, to retain intact the principles and practices evolved by their predecessors. But institutions and traditions, which take quite as long to die as to grow, must have lingered long and the local officials must have carried

them on as much as was possible for them. The Sayyad regime may be left unnoticed because there is nothing to be recorded to its credit in so far as the revenue system is concerned. When the Lodhīs came to power, they were confronted with the same problems as their Turkish predecessors. Apart from military affairs, which occupied most of their time and attention, their ideas and institutions differed in several respects from those of the early Sultāns. Sikandar Lodhī seems to have shown great interest in the improvement of Indian agriculture. He made a most useful contribution to the land revenue system of India by introducing one uniform *Gas* (yard) of forty-one digits as a standard unit of measurement.\*

We have referred to the broad principles and practices of the land revenue system evolved by the early Muslim kings of India. It was on the foundation of these principles and practices that Sher Shāh Sūrī and Akbar the Great constructed the fine superstructure which has survived to our own times. Neither Sher Shāh nor Akbar alone can be said to have evolved the system: They made their own contributions to it and carried it to its completion. They picked up the threads already there and wove them into a fine fabric. Sher

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\* For a detailed account of the subject, see *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, pp. 239 ff.; and *The Agrarian Systems of Muslim India*.

Shāh had gathered a good deal of experience in revenue matters as a *Shiqdār* of his father's *Jagīr*. On coming to the throne he screwed up the machinery of revenue administration and infused new life and efficiency into it by stamping out corruption and introducing reforms where necessary. The most important contribution he made to the revenue system was the introduction of *Ray'* or schedule of crop-rates of assessment. Adding the produce of the three kinds of land, *viz.*, good, middling and poor, and dividing the total by three, an average was found and one-third of this average was fixed as the rate of assessment by the Government. The system of division of crops was discouraged, and Sher Shāh and his successor, Islām Shāh, are said to have "practically freed Hindustān from it". Sher Shāh preferred the system of measurement and enforced it as far as possible. He ordered a general survey of the land under his sway. The *mazrūa'* (cultivated) and *ghair mazrūa'* (uncultivated) lands were measured and on the basis of this survey was prepared a register containing the rights of owners and the measurements of all cultivated plots of land with their different classes. The general survey served as a good basis for the fixing of a new *Jām*. This was a good and useful work, which neither the Lodhīs nor the Sayyads had done. Though, it may be observed, the survey could not have been very satisfactory because Sher Shāh's reign was too short to permit it, yet there can be no doubt that the



move taken by him was in the right direction.\*

With the experience of the Sūr Govern-  
 —, of the ment at his back and the services  
 Bādshāhat. of Shāh Mansūr, Muzaffar Khān  
 Turbatī, 'Itimād Khān and  
 Todar Mall, who had served under the Sūrīs,  
 at his disposal, Akbar carried the revenue  
 policy to its logical conclusion. The old *tanāb*,  
 which was made of hemp fibres, had the defect  
 that it expanded when wet and contracted when  
 dry. Akbar introduced a new *jarīb* which was  
 made of bamboo poles joined together with iron  
 rings. Sikandar Lodhi's *gaz* was again taken  
 as a standard unit of measurement and a *bigha*,  
 as before, was sixty yards by sixty yards. Having  
 fixed a standard land measure, the survey of  
 the *Khālsa* land was undertaken. The Punjab,  
 territory between Lāhore and Bihār, Mālwa,  
 and southern and eastern Gujarāt were surveyed  
 and all the cultivable land was divided into  
 four classes, *viz.* (1) *Polaj*, which was subject  
 to continuous cultivation, (2) *Parautī*, which  
 was left fallow for sometime after continuous  
 cultivation, (3) *Chāchar*, which was allowed  
 to rest for four years in order to regain its  
 fertility and (4) *Banjar*, which remained out of  
 cultivation for more than five years. All these  
 four classes of land were dealt with differently.  
 The first two classes were sub-divided into good,  
 middling and poor according to their fertility.

\* *Aīn-i-Akbarī*, Vol. II, p. 296; and *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, pp. 298 ff.

The average of these grades of land was to be the estimated produce per *bigha* and this was to serve as the basis of assessment. The other two classes were treated separately because of their inferiority. Their revenue was increased only progressively. In the assessment of the land revenue such factors as access to water, situation, *etc.*, were duly taken into consideration. The average produce per *bigha* having been ascertained, it was left to commute it into cash payment. To do this, statements of produce and prices current during the decade preceding the survey, were sent for from all towns and villages and the share of the State was commuted into cash payment according to the average of the rates shown in those statements. The commutation work was done by Government officials and cash rates were fixed by them. Different rates were fixed for different crops. Commutation could be reconsidered at the request of the cultivator and he was permitted to pay the revenue in kind if he thought the cash rate was exorbitant. The system of farming was put an end to and the collectors were ordered to deal directly with the cultivators without the aid of intermediaries. At first settlement was made every year, but in order to obviate the inconvenience caused by regularly recurring measurements, valuations and assessments of individual holdings, the settlement was made *Dchsāla* (*decennial*) on the basis of the average payment of the preceding decade. Since the Government, the cultivators and the

collectors knew what would be the revenue of a particular year, the work of collection was much facilitated and greatly expedited. The tentative settlement first made at Gujarāt was later extended to the whole of the Mughal Empire, and the regulations hitherto confined to the *Khālṣa* lands were made applicable to *Jagīr* lands and the *Dastūr-ul'-Amāl* was made binding on the *Jagīrdārs* as well. Regular registers were maintained in all villages and the measurements and classifications of the lands and the names of owners *etc.*, were recorded with great care. Though the cultivators were allowed the option of paying the State demand in kind, cash payment was preferred and encouraged. In order to prevent the malpractices of the mean middlemen, they were induced to bring the dues direct to the State officials. If they thought the average was fixed too high, they could successfully insist on actual measurement, division and valuation of their crops. They were exempted from a number of cesses and granted liberal concessions in bad times. Their interests were duly safeguarded and no effort was spared to promote their material welfare. There was a *Dīwān* in each *Sāba*. His principal duty was to collect the revenues of the State and remit them to the *Dīwān* of the Central Government. Each *Sarkār* had an '*Amil*', each *Pargana* a *Qānnīngō* and each *Dastūr* a *Muqaddam*. These officers, assisted by a staff of subordinate officers, collected the revenue and remitted it to the Imperial Treasury.

Changes were introduced from time to time to suit the needs of the hour. The system, as elaborated by Akbar, was followed by the later Mughals and has survived to our own times under the name 'Raiyatwārī Settlement' which is now in vogue. The critics who adversely criticize the Muslim Government by saying that the revenue was fixed too high seem to forget that the Hindū rulers of old had fixed it even higher; they do not make any allowance for the fact that the land revenue was the main source of State income in the past. Suffice it to say here that after paying the State dues, the cultivator was left with enough to spend and spare\*.

Muslim kings showed a remarkable interest in the upkeep and development of means of communication and transport and the result was a wide-spread network of roads and highways in the Muslim Empire. Roads were kept in good condition by the State for its administrative requirements and the efficient working of the postal system, to which a reference has been made, affords ample testimony to prove this fact. As regards security, the State undertook to protect the person and property of the people in general and of the travellers and traders in particular.

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\* *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, pp. 272 ff.; *The Mughal Empire From Bābar To Aurangzeb*, pp. 57-8, 152 ff. and 402 ff.; and *Ain-i-Akbari*, (Ain 15), Vol. II, p. 88; and *Akbarnāma*, pp. 366-67.

It also made suitable provisions for their comfort and convenience. Professor K. T. Shah's tribute to the Muslim kings in this connection is richly deserved and it cannot be better conveyed to the reader than in his own fine words :—

“ In Muhammadan times, there is hardly a Prince of any importance, who is not in some way connected with road-making. Great arterial highways, planted with a veritable arcade of trees all along their length, linked the principal centres of the Empire over hundreds and hundreds of miles. The comfort and convenience of the travelling public was duly secured by the public hostels — walled enclosures with ample lodging and stabling, water tanks, and provision shops, to supply all the needs of the travellers at convenient stages ; while the distance travelled was indicated by mile-stones easily noticeable even at night. Where the nature of the country would not permit proper road-making, or where transport by water was more convenient, the rivers were utilised for popular as well as Imperial voyages, attended by all the pomp and ceremony of a most luxurious court ”.\*

Among the principal means of conveyance may be mentioned bullocks and bullock-carts, horses and camels, mules and donkeys.

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\* *The Splendour That Was 'Ind.* pp. 214-15.

## CHAPTER III

### TOLERATION

In its limited sense the word *toleration* means recognition of right of private judgment in matters religious, or liberty to uphold one's religious beliefs and forms of worship without any interference. In its widest sense it means much more than this and amounts to even-handed treatment of all and sundry in all respects, covering not only religious freedom and liberty of conscience but also recognition of right of enjoying privileges of all kinds without regard to religious differences and without making invidious discrimination between the rulers and the ruled or between one class and another. It will be a negation of toleration if a person is granted freedom of thought and worship but is not admitted to those privileges to which his fellow-beings are, or rather if he is subjected to such gross inequalities as have often been experienced by the people of the countries under foreign domination. It was toleration in the widest and not limited sense that the Muslim rulers of India granted to their subjects of all classes and creeds. They enjoined not only liberty of thought and freedom of worship, but also admitted them to all powers and privileges

which they themselves enjoyed. They behaved as Indian national kings, completely identified themselves with the interests of their subjects and worked for their social, cultural and economic amelioration. Under them the Hindūs enjoyed co-equal status with the sons of the ruling race and occupied the highest offices in the State next only to that of the king.

No foreign government, however powerful and organized, can last long if it outrages the religious sentiments of the subject people and deprives them of all those powers and privileges which the members of the ruling race themselves enjoy. Toleration in its widest sense is the *sine qua non* of its permanence and perpetuation. The successful domination of India by Musalmāns for so many centuries testifies to the fact that universal toleration in its widest sense was a general rule, which they strictly observed. For the time being the sons of the soil were deprived of their political freedom; but the Sultāns behaved as kings of all the people under their sway and not as kings of Muslims alone. Between them and their Hindū subjects the unifying bond was not one of faith or spiritual unity but one of sovereign and subjects. The Sultāns were not concerned with the spiritual salvation of their non Muslim subjects — that was a matter to be decided by the *Zimmis* (non Muslims) themselves. As long as the latter obeyed the Imperial *firmāns* and submitted to the

Intolerance  
Impossible.

Imperial authority, the former were quite content and there was nothing to fear from. And, as long as the Sultans did not interfere with the religion of the ruled (*Zimmīs*), the latter were quite happy. The Hindūs 'worked, fought and died for the empire' and if 'they were prepared to make so many sacrifices for the perpetuation of Muslim Rule in India', it must have proved a blessing for them. For, after all, it was the Muslims and not the Kshatriyas or Rājapūts who stopped the inroads of the Mughals and rid the people of the tyranny of the *Muqaddams*. After suffering for centuries at the hands of native tyrants, India was badly in need of peace and anyone who could bring peace to the disturbed land was bound to enlist their active sympathy and support and was fully entitled to their gratitude. Within the empire, we know, the Hindūs were quite safe and free to enjoy full freedom of worship and liberty of conscience; they were exempt even from the payment of the *Jizīa*. Outside, all was fair in war according to the accepted traditions of the age and even Muslims were not spared. "The armies of Turkish and Khiljī Sultāns were composed of Muslims as well as Hindūs and in the destruction of temples in Southern India the Hindūs had a part."<sup>\*</sup> In almost all wars of Mediæval India ordinary citizens and villagers were not disturbed, so much so that they did not often know so important a news as

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<sup>\*</sup> A. M. (Oct.-Dec., 1931) p. 8.



the change of a ruler. The whole fury of the attack fell on the temple not because it was a place of worship and a seat of idols but because it was a repository of India's age-long accumulated wealth. The real object of the invader, it must be remembered, was not the temple but the fabulous wealth it contained and the main motive was mundane — greed for gold —, and not religious — propagation of Islām. Had the Hindū temple been as simple and austere as the Muslim mosque, Mahmūd of Ghaznīn would not have invaded India time and again, nor had 'Alā-ud-Dīn detailed his expeditions against the Deccan. Universal toleration within the Sultānat was, therefore, recognized as the the only possible policy to be pursued by the Sultān. It was not a matter of choice or of free will but of compulsion and dire political necessity. The Muslim monarch might have good grounds for scorning and scoffing at the fanciful laws and even ludicrous principles and practices of his Hindū subjects, but he could not, in his own interest, ridicule them publicly even when they happened to be most inhuman and palpably monstrous.\* Moreover, Mediæval

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\* When in 1291 A. C. Sultān Jalāl-ud-Dīn Khiljī ordered the retreat of his army from Ranthambhor, which he failed to storm, his nephew, Malik Ahmad Habib, complained, "If the Emperor returns without conquering Ranthambhor, people's respect for him will decrease..." and the Sultān laughed and said "Do you not see that the Hindūs pass every day by my palace, blowing their conches and beating their drums on their

Hindūism was armed and organized and, therefore, had to be tolerated. Why after all, it may be asked, did the Hindūs support or least tolerate a centralized Muslim monarchy which, we are taught to believe, outraged their religious sentiments and how was it that a handful of foreigners succeeded in subduing the sons of the soil and unifying the country when the task had proved too much for their Hindū predecessors? The answer is self-evident. Apart from all that has been said, we know it for certain that the Sultāns treated their Hindū subjects quite as kindly as their co-religionists, for there is not the slightest indication in the political or religious literature of the Hindūs of any Hindū national reaction against the Muslim Rule. Not that they were unwilling or had no means to oppose it but because they preferred it much to the tyranny of their Rājput rulers. The Government of Mediæval India was in fact 'a comradeship between two energetic and militant communities' and the ruler was Muslim because,

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way to worship their idols by the bank of the Jumna. They follow the laws of their infidelity before my eyes, despising me and my royal authority... The enemies of the faith—in my capital and before my eyes — live in luxury and splendour and arrogantly pride themselves over the Musalmāns on account of their prosperity and wealth... Shame on me. I leave them in luxury and pride and content myself with the few *tānkas* I get from them by way of charity." (*Tārikh-i-Firoz Shāhī*, p. 216 P. T.) The impotent intolerance was preached but not practised by the Sultān, for his political commonsense was far superior to his theology. *A. M.* (Oct.-Dec., 1931), pp. 5-6.

with Hindūism divided and sub-divided into castes and sub-castes, the Musalmāns were the strongest and most united minority. But the Sultāns, whether they liked it or not, had to ascend the throne under conditions which were highly favourable to the Hindūs.

Among the charges of intolerance levelled against the Muslim rulers of India, three stand out as the most pre-eminent: (1) destruction of Hindū temples, (2) imposition of *Jizīa*, and (3) general persecution of the Hindūs. We propose to take up each charge separately and examine it at some length in order to see how far it is true.

The first charge, *i.e.* the destruction of Hindū temples, is based on two-fold evidence: (1) some statements in the contemporary accounts and (2) temple-like appearance of some ancient mosques and the material of temples used in their construction. We take the first part of this twofold evidence: The destruction of temples and places of worship is neither enjoined nor countenanced but emphatically forbidden by Islām. But the prejudice which the early Muslims carried against idolatry was so strong that the subject had become a theme on which they ceaselessly talked and wrote. Thus whenever the contemporary chroniclers refer to the conquest of a country or the capture

of a fort or the suppression of a rebellion, they give full vent to their religious vanity by exaggerating the so-called iconoclastic activities of their Imperial patrons. Their effusions, based on vanity, should not be taken too seriously. Moreover, it was only in the times of war that some clever leaders, in order to achieve their objects in view, took advantage of the prevalent spirit and exploited the religious zeal of their followers by giving their expeditions the colour of religious errands. In peaceful times — “Throughout the extensive Empire of Delhi Hindū temples were left in unmolested peace”.\* The statements of the contemporary chroniclers about the destruction of temples refer only to the times of war and not of peace and the temples destroyed were outside and not within the Sultānat of Delhi. Here it is important to note that in the destruction of the temples of the South even the Hindūs had a part.† To turn to the second part of the evidence: There are some ancient mosques which show the lineaments of Hindū temples and there are others in which the material of Hindū temples seems to have been employed. It is on the basis of this flimsy material that the theory of iconoclasm or intolerance has been built by hostile critics. Leaving aside the fact that such a policy was an impossibility for the Muslim rulers of India, as we have already noted, there is not a scrap

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\* A. M. (Oct.-Dec, 1931), p. 4.

† *Ibid.*, p. 8.

of evidence to show that the material used in the construction of the mosques is that torn from the temples situated within the Sultānat and destroyed during the days of peace. How are we then to account for the signs of Hindū temples in some of the ancient mosques and the material of temples used in others? There are four probable explanations: (1) The material used in the mosques belonged to the temples destroyed in the times of war. (2) The temples deserted and not claimed by the Hindūs were made use of by Musalmāns and converted into mosques. (3) We know of a number of wholesale conversions—a Rāja embracing Islām and his subjects following his suit. In such cases, it is reasonable to believe, the new converts converted their temples into mosques. (4) Finally, if some ancient mosques show the features of Hindū temples, it is because the Hindūs who changed their religion but not their likes and dislikes, built their mosques according to their tastes.

Next we turn to the *Jizīa*, against which so much malicious propaganda has been carried on and about which so much misunderstanding has arisen that the tax has almost lost its true significance and has come to mean a punishment for unbelief and a forceful means of propagating Islām and winning converts. In order to show its true significance and to explain its real aim and object, it is necessary to point out at the outset that it

was not an oppressive tax and was never intended to be a burden on the *Zimmis* (non Muslims). It was levied on able-bodied men for the protection of their person and property in lieu of military service at the rate of about Rs. 6/- per head per annum. Women, children, insane, invalid and illiterate persons, lunatics, slaves, those serving in the army and those having no property were exempt from it. That it was not a tax on the free exercise of religion, as is often supposed, is evident from the fact that priests, preachers and religious preceptors were outside the sphere of its influence. The view that it was levied only on the *Zimmis* and hence it was a punishment for their unbelief is ill-conceived, for even the believers (Muslims) had to pay a similar tax under a different name, *Zakāt*, from which the *Zimmis* were exempt. Thus while the Hindūs and other non Muslims had to pay the *Jizīa*, the Muslims had to pay the *Zakāt*. There is no point in associating 'inferiority complex' with this tax, for it sought to draw no discrimination between the rulers and the ruled. The notion that the *Jizīa* was imposed to accelerate conversions is equally ill-founded; for those who were able to part with a petty amount for the protection of their person and property but who evaded payment by renouncing their religion and accepting Islām had to pay a greater amount in the form of *Zakāt* on becoming Muslim. All that has been said is to remove the mass of misunderstanding that has grown

round the tax. As to the extent to which it was levied in Muslim India, it must be remembered that for the most part it was not levied at all and whenever it was levied — such cases are rare — it was levied for financial reasons and was not collected rigidly or recklessly.

“Three or four cases of attempted oppression, to which our historians refer, prove, rather than disprove, the general law” — toleration. The fables and fabrications such as prohibition of Hindū fairs and festivals, parties and processions, ablutions and worship *etc.* have sprung up from a false reading and misrepresentation of the original sources and are based on bazar gossips or hearsay evidences.\* Champions of Hindū-Muslim enmity and communal disorders have taken certain obscure passages from the accounts of the contemporary chroniclers and forced on them interpretations which the texts do not bear and meaning which their authors never meant to be conveyed. For instance, a passage is taken from Barnī's account and is construed to mean that ‘Alā-ud-Dīn Khiljī persecuted the

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\* There are a number of obscure words, terms and passages in the contemporary accounts. These must be fully guarded against, for implicit reliance on them has resulted in gross misrepresentation of facts. Apart from this, the evidence of the contemporary writers, which is often conflicting and contradictory, must be carefully sifted before forming and expressing an opinion about an individual or an event.

Hindūs by depriving them of their wealth and ordering them not to wear silk apparel, ride horses or shoot their arrows from Persian bows.\* Before taking up the passage and showing its correct meaning, it must be pointed out that 'Alā-ud-Dīn had withdrawn all those lands which had been granted by his predecessors to Musalmāns by way of *Jāgīrs*, *Waqfs* (endowments), *Ināms* (rewards) *etc.* because they had not only deprived the State of a vast amount of income but had also become a great source of nuisance to the Government. After dealing with the Muslim *Muqta's* (land-holders), Alā-ud-Dīn turned towards the Hindū landlords, variously called *Muqaddams*, *Khots* and *Bilāhirs*,† who had received lands from the State on the condition of paying stipulated revenue to the Imperial Exchequer. They collected the revenue on behalf of the Government and for this work they were granted some special concessions. In addition to this remuneration, they were also allowed to hold lands

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\* Barnī's account contains a number of obscure words and passages, which have been fully exploited by hostile critics and used against 'Alā-ud-Dīn. It should be studied with great caution.

† *Muqaddam* means first man and may be described as head-man. *Khot* is perhaps the Hindī-ised form of Persian *Khat* or deed and may be described as the man who executed a deed in favour of the revenue officer to the effect that he would be responsible for the collection of land tax from his village or locality. The real meaning and significance of the word *Bilāhir* are shrouded in obscurity and I have not yet been able to ascertain them.



and pastures for their own use. Taking advantage of their knowledge of local conditions and the weakness of the *Vizārat* Department as well as of their power and influence, they misappropriated a large portion of the State dues and grew fat at the expense of poor cultivators. As if this was not enough, they ignored the orders of the Central Government. Their mal-practices could not escape the ever-vigilant eyes of the Sultān who soon complained : "the *Khols* and *Muqaddams* ride on good horses, dress themselves daintily; use Persian bows, busy themselves in hunting or fight among themselves. They do not pay either *Khirāj* or *Jizīa*, house or grazing taxes, and (besides) they charge their dues of collecting revenue. They hold drinking and convivial parties. Whether called or uncalled, they do not come to the *Dīwān* (Revenue Office) and completely disregard the revenue officials."\* Even after making full allowance for the extravagant style and inflated language of Barnī, the truth cannot escape recognition that the complaint was reasonable. A king, who did not spare even his own co-religionists and never hesitated to deprive them of their peculiar privileges, cannot be expected to have left the corrupt *Muqaddams* and *Khols*, "who not only denuded the Treasury of a big amount of its income but whose mutual quarrels were responsible

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\* *Tārīkh-i-Fīrozshāhī*. p. 291; and Ferishta, Vol. I, p. 109. Also see A. M. (Oct.-Dec. 1931), p. 5, f. n.

for some political disorders also", in full enjoyment of their time-honoured concessions to which they were little entitled. The fact is : 'Neither the Muslims nor the Hindūs were allowed to enjoy any special privileges in the matter of *Kharāj*'. It was essential to deal with both of them and the Sultān dealt with both without fear or favour. Having dealt with the Muslims, he turned to the Hindūs (*Muqaddams etc.*) and reduced them to the position of farmers by (1) abolishing their perquisites called *Huqūq-i-Khotī*, i. e. 'the percentage of revenue they used to keep for themselves as payment for work' and appointing agents (*Nawābs*) of the Revenue Office (*Dīwān*), for the collection of revenues in future ; and (2) directing all land to be taxed 'in proportion to its extent' and ordering that 'the burden of the strong was not to be thrown on the weak'. This double-edged sword hit the headmen hard and referring to it Barnī says, with his usual extravagance, that 'the Hindū' was reduced to such straits that he could not ride on horseback, wear silk apparel or shoot his arrows from a Persian bow.\* This passage, when read without reference to the context, is capable of a different interpretation, but when read side by

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\* "A Hindū general, Malik Nāik, commanded the right wing of 'Alā-ud-Dīn's army and the Rāna of Chittor led his vanguard with five thousand men. There are a number of such examples. Could members of a community not allowed to ride horses and wear arms have occupied these positions?" See A. M. (Oct.-Dec.,) 1931.

side with the rest of the text and in the light of other reforms of 'Alā-ud-Dīn, it leads to the only conclusion that by 'the Hindū' Barnī means none other than the headmen and not all Hindūs: He means those against whom the double-edged sword was directed and whom he himself describes as *Muqaddams*, *Khots* and *Bilāhirs*, who were grossly corrupt. Moreover, Barnī does not say that they were ordered not to ride horses, wear silk apparel or shoot their arrows from Persian bows. The most that he says is that as a result of the reform they could not afford to do so. In the first place, it must be remembered that Barnī's language is too extravagant and too full of exaggeration; and secondly, though most of the *Muqaddams* etc. were Hindūs, there is no doubt that many of them were Muslims as well\*. Alā-ud-Dīn's drive was against corruption and against the time-honoured privileges, enjoyed whether by the Hindūs or by the Muslims; for did he not deprive the latter of their vested rights? Why then give the question a religious colour?

Barnī has also unjustly criticized 'Alā-ud-Dīn's policy of raising the scale of taxation to the maximum limit. Later historians have

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\* A.M. (Oct.-Dec., 1931). Firoz Shāh Tughluq reverted to the old policy and as a result of the changes introduced by him the Hindūs (*Khots* and *Muqaddams*) gained enormously and grew wealthy more than ever. (See *Tārīkh-i-Firozshāhi* by Afif, pp. 98-99; and *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, pp. 289-90).

followed him and exhausted their eloquence in trying to prove that the Sultān was unduly harsh on his Hindū subjects. Personally, 'Alā-ud-Dīn was neither vainly extravagant nor reckless in any respect, nor was he moved by any morbid motive or sordid love of amassing wealth. The defence of the country against the recurring Mughal invasions, the maintenance of law and order and the conquest of Southern India must have put a heavy drain on the Treasury, which required to be replenished before everything else. Taxation was the only remedy and the land-holders cultivators, merchants and traders of both the communities had to bear the burden. Since in those days land revenue was the main source of State income, it was the landlords who bore the greatest burden and as most of the landlords were Hindūs, though there is no doubt that many of them were Muslims also, hostile critics have again given the question a religious colour and tried to show that the object of 'Alā-ud-Dīn was to cripple the Hindūs as such. The extravagant language and superficial observations of Barni form the foundation of such false allegations. The truth is that all classes of people bore the burden, but the Hindūs probably felt it more keenly than all others. "In the first place", says a fair-minded Hindū scholar, "it was a mere accident, and in the second it was quite legitimate; for, strictly speaking, the *Khots* and the *Muqaddams* had no right to any thing else beyond their share or commission on

collection.\* The fact that the *Jizīa* was not levied from the Hindūs who were directly under the sway of the Sultān is highly significant in that it shows the attitude of the Muslim ruler towards his Hindū subjects.†

Again, it is on Barnī's evidence that Dr. Smith and others of his School have based a charge of 'madness' against Muhammad Tughluq and poured the venom of their wrath on him. This is not the place to deal with the subject‡ in detail and to reveal the absurdity of the charge, but in fairness to history it must be pointed out here that Barnī "was bitterly prejudiced against the Sultān" and hence his strictures against him in his inflated language. Taking their cue from him and accepting his remarks at their face value, these modern writers have thrown so much mud on Muhammad Tughluq that it has become almost impossible to appreciate his real character. Far from substantiating the charge, there is nothing in the accounts of Ibn Batūta§ and other contemporary chroniclers even to warrant the applicability of the charge, which figures so prominently in the works of most of the

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\* *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 266.

† *Ibid.*, p. 267.

‡ A detailed discussion on the subject will appear in my *Medieval India Under Muslim Kings*.

§ He was a Moorish traveller who visited India during the reign of Muhammad Tughluq.

so-called historians of India. Mr. G. Brown's unbiassed appreciation of Muhammad Tughluq's character and work is so very near the truth that it must be reproduced in his own words:—

“That he was mad is a view of which the contemporaries give no hint; that he was a visionary, his many-sided, practical and vigorous character forbids us to believe. To call him a despot may be true, but no other form of government was conceivable in the Middle Ages: to use the term as though it were the name of a vice or a disease is to ignore the fact that a despotic prince who is accessible to new ideas or who embarks on measures of reform can do much to advance the prosperity of his people in an age when education is but little advanced and conservatism deeply rooted. Such a ruler, however, has in his own time serious difficulties to face: the inevitable disturbance of vested interests, the innate preference for established custom, raise up for him numerous enemies, officials carrying out unpopular reforms shelter themselves beneath the plea of the master's orders: should unmerited disaster befall his schemes, should corrupt or incompetent officials pervert their ends, it is he — because he is a despot — who must bear the blame: if he has been a warrior and Death finds him when engaged on some small campaign — like Muhammad bin Tughluq beneath the walls of Thatta — the judgment of Heaven is cited to confirm the popular verdict, and

literature records :—

“He left a name at which the world grew pale  
To point a moral or adorn the tale.”\*

The charge of blood-thirstiness is equally ludicrous and betrays lack of sound judgment. There is no doubt that Muhammad Tughluq inflicted severe punishments on evil-doers, but we must remember that punishments were always severe in those times, both in Asia and Europe. Moreover, it is an admitted fact that he had an innate love for justice. His own unqualified submission to the judgments of law courts against him amply illustrates his respect for law.† A king who himself abided by law would naturally expect others to obey it. It is the height of injustice to say that he found pleasure in the destruction of human species and organized man hunts. Since he did not allow himself to be dominated by the clerical party, he became a prey to their denunciations.‡

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\* Compare this searching and penetrating analysis of Muhammad Tughluq's character and work with the superficial observations of Smith (*Oxford History of India*, pp. 287 ff.), Elphinstone (*History of India*, pp. 347 ff.) and Edward Thomas (*The Chronicles*, pp. 202-03).

† How he bowed to the decisions of the Qāzī (Judge) against him may be read in the pages of Ibn Batūta (*Travels*, pp. 202-3).

‡ See *History of Mediæval India*, pp. 295 ff. and *History of Qarauna Turks* by Ishwari Prasad.

Accusations against other Muslim rulers are based either on the misconception of the *Jizīa* or on some obscure passages such as those of Barni or on the prejudice of those who have raised them and cannot be but false.

Independent Muslim rulers of the outlying provinces followed the same policy of toleration — no other policy was possible. They granted full freedom of worship and independence of thought to all of their subjects. Hindūs were taken into confidence, employed in the service of the State and admitted to all powers and privileges, regardless of religious differences.

Turning next to the Mughal Period we find that almost all the rulers of the house of Bābar were singularly free from fanatic zeal. They treated their subjects — Muslims, Hindūs, Sikhs and all others — with justice, respected their religious susceptibilities and granted them full freedom of worship and liberty of conscience. The only king of that famous house who is alleged to have behaved as a bigot and to have persecuted the *Zimmīs* (non Muslims), particularly the Hindūs, was Aurangzeb.

In his case, the dismissal of certain Hindū clerks and the destruction of some Hindū temples, the revival of the *Jizīa* and the propagation of Islām by force — forming the foundation of his 'fanaticism' and 'intolerance' —

Toleration  
under the  
Mughals.

False Charges  
a g a i n s t  
A u r a n g z e b



stand out prominently in the charge-sheet against him. These charges, levelled against him with whatever intentions, are false and are calculated only to widen the gulf between the Hindūs and the Musalmāns of India. Aurangzeb, a just king whose sense of justice is not only admitted but admired by the worst of his critics, cannot be said to have persecuted his Hindū and other non Muslim subjects and to have dug his own grave by alienating their sympathies and support. The truth is that he treated all his subjects fairly and equitably, employed them in the service of the State without any restrictions of rank, race or religion, rewarded their services without stint and entrusted them with great powers and responsibilities; but when they betrayed him again and again in spite of his repeated warnings and pardons, he did not spare them even if they happened to be his nearest relatives. The treatment he meted out to his father and brothers bears eloquent testimony to his sense of justice and devotion to duty. If he dismissed a certain number of Hindū clerks in the service of the State, it was because they were corrupt and incorrigible;\* and if he punished some Hindūs, it was because they were found guilty of serious offences. It should be noted that even his own co-religionists, nay, even his own kith and kin, could not escape punishment if found guilty of an offence. Time and again

\* See *The Mughal Empire From Babar To Aurangzeb* pp. 294—95.

officers like Mahārāja Jaswant Singh were found in league with the enemies of the Emperor and yet we find hundreds of Hindūs holding high positions in the State. To give the question a religious colour is calculated to create communal disorders by putting the sister communities of India at logger-heads and allowing them no respite to patch up their differences. The destruction of temples, like the dismissal of Hindū clerks, is another false charge against that Great Mughal. This subject is too large to be discussed in detail at the short space at our disposal.\* Suffice it to say here that the destruction of temples followed the demolition of mosques and other gross outrages committed by the Hindūs, and that only those temples were destroyed that had been built on the sites of mosques, or those that had been newly built without permission, or those that had become breeding-grounds of sedition and political intrigue, otherwise Imperial *Firmāns* issued from time to time for the protection of all places of worship (Hindū temples being no exception) have come down to us to testify to the tolerance of that much-maligned monarch.† As regards *Jizīa*, it should be noted that it was not revived by Aurangzeb till 1679 A.C. The fact that he did not impose it for so many

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\* For details, see *The Mughal Empire From Bābar To Aurangzeb*, pp. 295 ff.

† For these *Firmāns*, see *The Mughal Empire From Babar To Aurangzeb*, pp. 296-98.

years during his reign clearly shows that he understood the current politics of the country and was not inclined to revive it. But for some serious considerations, both political and financial, he would have continued that policy. The *Jizīa* was not revived to compel the Hindūs to become Muslims, as is often alleged by the critics. Since it was a petty tax, it could be easily paid by everyone from whom it was due. If, therefore, those who were able to part with this petty amount as a price for the protection of their person and property, escaped payment by renouncing their religion and embracing Islām, the fault lay with them and not with Islām or Aurangzeb. But it must be remembered, as already noted, that even by becoming Muslims they could not evade or escape payment, for in that case they had to pay a greater amount in the form of *Zakāt* leviable only from the Musalmāns. The last item on the charge-sheet against Aurangzeb is that he propagated Islām by force. In the first place, we cannot suppose a king well-acquainted with the laws of Islām, which preaches universal peace, enjoins religious tolerance and positively forbids the propagation of faith by force, to have compelled the *Zimmīs* to embrace Islām; and secondly, there is no direct reliable historical evidence to bear out the veracity of this version. Speaking of some cases of conversion in the Punjab, Sir Thomas Arnold says, "It should be noted that the only authority for these forced conversions is family

or local tradition and no mention of such is made in the historical accounts of Aurangzeb's reign".\* Since it has been taught and taken to be a gospel truth, though it is far from it, that Islām was propagated in India at the point of the sword, Aurangzeb's well-known zeal for his faith has furnished a plausible ground for the erroneous belief of some families of Northern India, the history of whose conversion is so forgotten that it cannot now be traced, that they had been converted to Islām by force—"the most easily assignable cause" as Sir Thomas Arnold rightly remarks. And, then, local or family traditions, unsupported by reliable historical evidence, are not only unsafe but actually dangerous guides in the realm of sober history. On the other hand, we have sufficient evidence at our disposal to show that hundreds and thousands of Hindūs embraced Islām during the Mughal Period of their own free will and became active missionaries of their new faith. "When Shāh Jahān was returning to Lāhore from Kashmīr", says the author of the *Tazkirat-us-Salātin-i-Chaghtāīya*, "the Rāja of Juggaur was honoured with an audience, and he, with his four thousand followers, became a Muslim".† We have also instances of well-known persons embracing Islām during the reign of Aurangzeb.‡ For the rest, the same

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\* See *The Preaching of Islām*, p. 269.

† *Vide Aurangzeb And His Times*, p. 188.

‡ *Ibid*, p. 180.

forces were at work for the spread of Islām during the Mughal Period as had been at work during the early Muslim Period: The part played by Muslim saints and savants, the real missionaries of Islām whose faith-inspiring deeds and teachings were better and surer methods of making converts than the use of force for the purpose, has not been fully or even partially appreciated. At one time, we learn, the Rāja of Kishtwār (in Kashmīr) was converted to Islām by Shaikh Farīd-ud-Dīn and as an effect of his conversion a vast majority of his subjects followed his example and accepted Islām as their religion.\* It was in this way that wholesale conversions were effected.

There is no doubt that the resources of the State were used in aid of the missionary propaganda of the dominant authority, but this was not peculiar to the Muslim rulers of India. In the past, when religion and State were inseparably connected with each other, the power in the saddle always encouraged the propagation of the State religion and spent huge sums of money in this cause. Even the best of the Buddhist monarchs like Asoka the Pious freely expended the income of the State derived from the entire population in the cause of Buddhism. Asoka's active discouragement of Hindūism and the propagation of his faith is the best case in

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\* *Ibid.*, p. 186, and *The Preaching of Islām*.

point.\* Even in our own times we see the money collected from the conquered people being freely spent in the propagation of the religion of the ruling race. Like other religious enthusiasts, Aurangzeb too patronized his proselytes and encouraged the peaceful propagation of his faith. Strangely enough, the misdeeds of the zealots of other religions have provided no ground for their condemnation, but the acts of Aurangzeb have been misconstrued, criticized and condemned, despite the fact that they were the inevitable outcome of the system in vogue since the very dawn of history. Some of the tributes paid to the tolerance of that Great Moghal may appropriately be reproduced here:-

"In an interesting collection of Aurangzeb's orders and despatches as yet unpublished", says Sir Thomas Arnold, "we find him laying down what may be termed the supreme law of toleration for the ruler of people of another faith...Government posts ought to be bestowed according to ability and from no other consideration."†

That this 'supreme law of toleration' was put into practice and followed by Aurangzeb is testified to by Alexander Hamilton, who visited

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\* *Early History of India*, pp. 176-77; *Causes of the Dismemberment of the Maurya Empire*, in J. A. S. B. (May, 1910), pp 259 ff.; and *Aurangzeb And His Times*, p. 189.

† See *The Preaching of Islam*, p. 214.

India towards the close of his reign, in the following words :—

“ The religion of Bengal by law established is Mahometan, yet for one Mahometan there are above an hundred pagans, and the public offices and posts of trust are filled with men of both persuasions.”\* “ Everyone is ”, says the same authority, “ free to serve and worship God in his own way. And persecutions for religion’s sake are not known among them ”.†

The above discussion boils down to this that the Muslim rulers of India were quite tolerant — more tolerant towards their Hindū subjects, on whose active co-operation and support they depended every moment, than their own Hindū rulers—, and that it was in fact the policy of universal toleration in its widest sense that made their rule not only possible but also popular in India. Nothing like the Massacre of St. Bartholomew’s Day took place during the Muslim Rule and we do not read of any ‘Inquisition’ or ‘Five Mile Act’, or ‘Corporation Act’ or Act of Uniformity in the contemporary chronicles. The notions propagated by the enemies of Islām that the Muslim kings of India persecuted the Hindūs are wholly unfounded and betray only their own bigotry and expose only their own intolerance.

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\* *A New Account of the East Indies*, Vol. II. p. 14.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 157-63.

## CHAPTER IV

### EDUCATION

No Mediæval Government had a regular department of public instruction, but Muslim India of the Middle Ages could justly boast of possessing one which looked after religious as well as educational institutions. Hardly was there a Muslim prince of importance whose name is not connected with the opening and endowing of a school or a college in his kingdom. Muslim kings, as a rule, took a living interest in the education of their subjects. They founded schools and colleges and established libraries and literary societies in various parts of their dominions and sought to supplement their educational work by liberally patronizing learned men and raising them to affluence so that they might be able to devote to their studies all their time and attention undisturbed by other worries. At times the machinery of education was thrown out of gear, but such times were very rare; for educational institutions, when founded, were endowed with enough to make them self-supporting, capable of maintaining themselves at all times without outside help. It was perhaps only during the days of acute unrest occasioned by external invasions or internal disorders that the sacred



cause of education suffered to a certain extent. Barring out a few such cases, however, education made mighty strides during the Muslim Period, so much so in fact that Muslim universities of Mediæval India were thronged by thousands of students and professors had often hundreds of hearers.

Apart from houses, where individual instructors imparting education received remuneration from their pupils in the form of personal service, the principal types of educational institutions were universities, *Madrasas* and *Maktabas*.<sup>\*</sup> While there were universities in capital cities and *Maktabas* and *Madrasas* in smaller towns, no village was without a mosque and no mosque was without a *Maktab* and a modest library. Mosques were not restricted to *Ibādat* or divine worship alone, but were also used as lecture-halls and places of instruction. *Khānqāhs* or shrines of Muslims saints, which were scattered all over the country, also played a similar part in the dissemination of knowledge, both spiritual and secular.<sup>†</sup> This will give some idea of the extent of education that was then imparted.

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<sup>\*</sup> *Maktabas* and *Madrasas* may roughly be likened to our present-day primary or middle schools and high schools or intermediate colleges respectively, though in many cases a *Madrasa* was little short of a full-fledged college of these days.

<sup>†</sup> *Vide Education in Muslim India* p. 32.

How the method of teaching was reformed under Akbar the Great is thus described in the *Ain-i-Akbari* :—

“ In every country, especially in Hindustan, boys are kept for years at school, where they learn the consonants and vowels. A great portion of the life of the students is wasted by making them read many books. His Majesty orders that every schoolboy should first learn to write the letters of the alphabet, and also learn to trace their several forms. He ought to learn the shape and name of each letter, which may be done in two days, when the boy should proceed to write the joined letters. They may be practised for a week, after which the boy should learn some prose and poetry by heart, and then commit to memory some verses to the praise of God, or moral sentences, each written separately. Care is to be taken that he learns to understand everything himself, but the teacher may assist him a little. He then ought for some time to be daily practised in writing a hemistich or a verse, and will soon acquire a current hand. The teacher ought specially to look after five things : knowledge of the letters, meanings of words, the hemistich, the verse, the former lesson. If this method of teaching be adopted a boy will learn in a month, or even in a day, what it took others years to understand, so much so that people will get quite astonished. Every boy ought to read

books on morals, arithmetic, the notation peculiar to arithmetic, agriculture, mensuration, geometry, astronomy, physiognomy, household matters, the rules of government, medicine, logic, the *tabī'*, *riyāzī* and *ilāhī* sciences and history, all of which may be gradually acquired. In studying Sanskrit, students ought to learn the *Bayakaran*, *Niyāi*, *Bedanta* and *Patanjali*. No one should be allowed to neglect those things which the present time requires. These regulations shed a new light on schools, and cast a bright lustre over *Madrasahs*."\*

Arabic, the language of the *Qur-ān*, was a compulsory subject in almost all schools and colleges and Persian, the language of the Court, was the medium of instruction. In the *Maktab*s the curriculum comprised learning by rote the sections of the *Qur-ān* necessary for the five compulsory prayers, the practice of reading and writing the alphabet and other lessons on wooden boards called *Takhtīs*, and the reading of the primer as well as some Persian books such as Sa'dī's *Karīmā* and Attar's *Pandnāma*; in the

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\* "The *tabī'*, *riyāzī* and *ilāhī* sciences are the names of the threefold divisions of sciences. *Ilāhī* or divine sciences comprise everything connected with theology and the means of acquiring a knowledge of God. *Riyāzī* sciences treat of quantity, and comprise mathematics, astronomy, music, and mechanics. *Tabī'* sciences comprehend physical sciences." (See *Ain* 25 of the *Ain-i-Akbarī*; and *Education in Muslim India*, pp. 20, 90-91.)

*Madrasas* it included the art of administration, arithmetic, algebra, astronomy, geometry, accounts, agriculture, economics, history, medicine, physics, philosophy, law, ritual, poetry and prose. Though the curriculum was sufficiently comprehensive and liberal, yet it is to be noted that every *Madrasa* did not always undertake to make provision for all the subjects enumerated above. Much depended upon the staff and the principal of each individual institution; for we know that there were regular movements of eager students from place to place in search of teachers who had specialized in certain subjects. The inclusion of the art of administration in the curriculum is significant in that it shows that the subject was not exclusively reserved for the princes of the royal blood, as emphasized in the *Arthāśāstras*, but was taught to the delegate governors and even to the governed for their association with every department of the Government.\*

The aim of education imparted was to bring out the latent faculties of students, to discipline the forces of their intellect and to develop their character: to equip them with all that was required for their material as well as moral improvement. Education was regarded as a preparation for life and for life after death, and hence it was that religion was

Aims and  
objects of edu-  
cation imparted.

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\* *Vide Education in Muslim India*, pp. 22 ff.

at the root of all study. In every *Madrassa* there was a mosque and every mosque had a *Maktab* and a library attached to it, so that religious education and secular instruction might go hand in hand. Discipline was rigorously maintained in all educational institutions and every teacher was bound to be careful about the morals and manners of his students. He was expected to see that his students were regular in the performance of their daily prayers and it was his duty to educate them in the science of social manners, such as *Adab* or respect for elders and *Khulq* or courtesy towards all others. Special importance was attached to the teaching of the *Qur-ān* with meaning — a great education in itself —, for the simple reason that it tended to make students politically democratic, socially amiable, religiously tolerant and morally strong.\*

Teachers were held in high esteem and a special dignity attached to their profession. Judges, ministers of religion *etc.* were taken from their class. There existed most cordial relations between the teachers and the taught. Since most of the institutions were residential, they lived together in constant intellectual communion and profited by one another's company. The monitorial system

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\* *Present-day Problems of Indian Education*, pp. 26-27 ; and *Education in Muslim India*, pp. 27-28.

was in vogue and was a great source of help to the teacher. As a rule, education was imparted free: No tuition fee was charged and often students were provided with board and lodging free. Most of the institutions were either State-started or State-aided, but there were others which owed their origin and existence to voluntary efforts. Salaried teachers and paid professors were employed in State schools and colleges. Vast endowments were created and large estates were set apart for their maintenance. In the schools that were held in private houses the teachers, as a point of honour, taught their pupils without receiving anything except personal service. The system of examination was very simple. The teacher-in-charge himself conducted the examination of his class and promoted the successful students to the next higher step in the ladder of education. Apart from *Sanads* or certificates and stipends or scholarships, *Tamghas* or medals were awarded to the more brilliant *alumni* in proportion to their merits. Truants and delinquents were punished physically, and not fined. Though the use of *Kora* and cane was common, the teachers could punish their students in any other way which their ingenuity might devise.\*

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\* See *Education in Muslim India*, pp. 1 ff.; Ferishta (Briggs), Vol. IV, p. 365; Elliot, Vol. VI, pp. 487 ff.; *Promotion of Learning in India*, pp. 99 ff.; and *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. IV, p. 409.

Before the advent of Islām in India education was the monopoly of the Brahmins who, for reasons of their own, refused to impart it to the masses.\* But under the Muslim rulers of India, whose religion recognized no barriers of rank or race in the acquisition of knowledge and whose Prophet placed immense emphasis on intellectual enfranchisement, it became the birth-right of every citizen, Muslim as well as Hindū, irrespective of sect — an achievement of which Muslim India might legitimately feel proud. For, after all, it was during the Muslim Period that the Hindūs, who had hitherto been deprived of the intellectual feast, began to drink deep at the

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\* According to the caste system, knowledge was an exclusive monopoly of the Brahmins. Here knowledge means spiritual knowledge or sacred lore to which none but they could have free access. Though against this there were some reactions, yet we are not sure of their results. One thing is nevertheless certain: When Musalmāns appeared in India they found the same state of affairs. I am not unaware of the universities of Nalanda, Taxila *etc.*, but my point is that mass education was unknown to India even during the best days of Hindū ascendancy. The famous universities just named were not open to all, admission being restricted to a very limited number. Referring to them, Professor K. T. Shah says. "Students were not admitted until they had proved themselves men of parts and well-read in books, old and new, by hard public discussion; and of ten candidates for admission, seven or eight were rejected." (*The Splendour That Was Ind*, p. 111).

fountains of education side by side with the sons of the ruling race without any restrictions of rank, race or religion. The doors of all educational institutions were thrown open to them and often their own national and religious books were included in their courses of study. Muslim kings also encouraged education among their Hindū subjects by granting *Jāgīrs* to deserving teachers, by making liberal allowances to and creating endowments for temples associated with their educational institutions and by ordering translation of Sanskrit books into Arabic and Persian and patronizing Sanskrit literature as a whole.\*

The Hindūs fully availed themselves of the liberal policy of their Muslim rulers. They took very kindly to Persian and studied it quite as eagerly as they now study English language and literature. One of the great results of this mutually reciprocal understanding and intercourse, facilitated by the liberal educational policy of Muslim Kings, was the creation of a new language, Urdū — the off-spring of Persian and Hindī —, which in course of time superseded its parents and became the *lingua franca* of Northern India. The view that it is a language foreign to the soil and that it must be got rid of on that score is wholly erroneous and betrays an utter ignorance of Indo-Islāmic

\* \* *Education in Muslim India*, p. 15; and *Present-day Problems of Indian Education*, p. 24.



cultural history. The real place of Urdū in the culture of the country is admirably set forth by a fair-minded Hindū scholar in the following words :—

“Almost every work in Indo-Persian literature contains a large number of words of Indian origin, and thousands of Persian words became naturalized in every Indian vernacular language. The mingling of Persian, Arabic and Turkish words and ideas with languages and concepts of Sanskritic origin is extremely interesting from the philological point of view, and this co-ordination of knowns and unknowns resulted in the origin of the beautiful Urdū language. That language in itself symbolized the reconciliation of the hitherto irreconcilable and mutually hostile types of civilization represented by Hindūism and Islām.”\*

The language, developed by the combined efforts of both Hindūs and Muslims, can now boast of a fairly wide and varied literature of its own both in poetry and prose.† It is a common

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\* See *J. R. S. A.*, (January, 1936<sup>1</sup>, p. 232.

† “I have always looked upon Urdū both as a language and as a medium of culture—as a common heritage of both the communities (Hindūs and Muslims)”—Rt. Hon. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru.

“Urdū is a language of polite intercourse. It is a heritage to whose present-day vitality and richness both Hindūs and Mūslems have contributed”—Hon. Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai.

heritage of both the communities and it would be equally unfair for either to subject it to a step-motherly treatment. It is highly gratifying to note a growing tendency in favour of Urdu and the day is not far when it will be unanimously adopted as a *lingua franca* for the whole of India. Once India has achieved linguistic unity, unification in other directions will be rendered much easier.

There existed separate *Maktabas* for the education of girls, but usually they received their education in the same schools where the boys did, of course, up to the primary standard when sexual consciousness had not yet awakened, and after that they were segregated from them and given their education either privately or in the schools specially provided for them. The daughters of the rich were given higher education in their own houses by learned ladies or old men of tried merits employed for the purpose. After acquiring primary education in the *Maktabas* meant for them or at home, the girls were put under the tuition of some elderly ladies of proved piety for instruction in domestic science, *i.e.*, cooking, spinning, sewing and looking after the young. Proper arrangements were made for the instruction of girls in household duties and the subject loomed largely in the curriculum designed for them†.

† *Vide Education in Muslim India*, pp. 187-98; and *Present day Problems of Indian Education*, pp. 27-28.

A short reference may also be made to the libraries which sprang up in India as a beneficent result of the love of learning of most of its Muslim rulers and became a valuable asset to the sacred cause of education. Muslim kings and other men of means used to collect rich stores of literature for their own use and build up big libraries which figured prominently among their proud possessions. There were libraries which were thrown open to and availed of by the public in general. How far private collections were accessible to persons other than their owners, we are not in a position to say ; but on the strength of information available we can say that in those days every well-to-do lover of learning had in his own house a modest library which was enough for his requirements and that people used to borrow books from one another and make copies of them in an ornamental hand for keeping them in their own collections. Unfortunately, however, most of this literary wealth was swept away by the wave of ruin which overtook the country during and after the Mutiny of 1857 A. C., when thousands of books were lost or destroyed or sold at ridiculously low prices by those who happened to possess them as loot. Some of the remnants, when escaped, travelled westward and are treasured in some of the libraries of Europe and others have been preserved by some ancient families and Indian Princes as their heirlooms. "They furnish" says Sir Abdul Qadir, "a

silent but eloquent testimony to the culture of days gone by, when in the absence of modern facilities for the propagation of literature and the multiplication of books, human patience endured great hardships to preserve for posterity the best thoughts of the learned men of antiquity."\*

Elsewhere in this book we shall have the occasion to refer to the first literary society founded by Prince Muhammad, the eldest son of Sultān Ghiyās-ud-Dīn Balban. Suffice it to say here that his example was followed by many of the nobles and others and the result was that numerous similar societies came into existence like mushrooms in various parts of the kingdom and became an important aid to the advancement of education in India.†

In passing we may also point out that it was the Musalmāns who brought paper into India about the tenth century A. C. and popularized its use there. Paper was first introduced into India from Samargand, where there was a big manufactory of it, and a number of factories were set up in India, the chief being at Siālkot. This was indeed one of the most material contributions made by Musalmāns

\*See *J. R. S. A.* (January, 1936), pp. 239-40.

† *Education in Muslim India*, pp. 42-43 and 283.

to the progress of education in India.\*

Nor was literary learning alone cultivated and encouraged. Technical education was given in *Kārkhānas* or workshops through the system of apprenticeship. The boys who did not attend a *Maktab* or a *Madrasa* were sent to these workshops for receiving necessary training in arts and crafts. The trading classes maintained their own schools for the instruction of their children in the rudiments of the three R's and made suitable arrangements for the promotion of their knowledge in business and accounts. Such schools have survived even to our own times. The fact that arts and crafts, industries and commerce flourished abundantly in Muslim India points to the existence of a good system of technical education.†

In short, education — both cultural and technical —, was systematically diffused during the Muslim Period of Indian history. Such educational efflorescence is sure to present a very large selection of ideas to a modern educationist who concerns himself with the educational reconstruction now contemplated. Discipline and devotion to learning, social life which

Musalmans' contributions to Indian educational thought and practice.

\* See *Education in Muslim India*, pp. 139-40

† *Ibid.*, pp. 199 ff.; and *I. G. I.*, Vol. IV, p. 436.

fosters fellow-feelings and buttresses the bonds of brotherhood, a liberal and comprehensive curriculum with a suitable standard of class-work, spiritual atmosphere in schools and colleges, co-education up to the primary standard when sexual consciousness has not yet awakened, the principle that the poor should be educated free and that the doors of all educational institutions should be flung open to all and sundry indiscriminately, that education is a preparation for life and for life after death, the injunction that 'no one should be allowed to neglect those things which the present time requires',\* co-ordination of education imparted and the profession to be followed after completing a course of study, and 'a broad humanism'† in which general knowledge, *i. e.*, knowledge of all the important affairs of the world, occupies a most important place are some of the striking

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\* For this as well as other regulations issued by Emperor Akbar with a view to reform the existing system of education, *vide Education in Muslim India*, pp. 86 ff.

† See Aurangzeb's theory of education in my *Education in Muslim India*, pp. 176 ff., and *Bernier's Travels*, pp. 154-61. It is embodied in the reproach he is said to have administered to his old teacher who had taught him rules of grammar etc., but failed to give him the liberal education he later felt necessary for himself and others. It emphasized, *inter alia*, the importance of general knowledge: familiarity with the languages of the neighbouring nations, acquaintance with the conspicuous features of every nation of the world;

features of the system of education in vogue in Muslim India. They appear to be the most essential ingredients of good liberal education. Regarded as ideals of education, they are a most valuable and welcome contribution to the enrichment of Indian educational thought and practice, and their importance is to be found in the fact that they produced great scholars, savants and seekers after truth, whose output on the intellectual side has few parallels in the whole history of Indian education.\*

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its resources and strength, its mode of warfare, its manners, religion, form of government and wherein its interests principally consist; with the origin of states: their progress and decline, the events, accidents or errors owing to which such great changes and mighty revolutions have been effected; with the reciprocal duties between the sovereign and his subjects, the art of war, of besieging a town or drawing an army; co-ordination of education imparted and the vocation to be followed after acquiring it, etc. Evidently, Aurangzeb laid stress on what may be called practical education. With him education was a preparation for the battle of life and hence the formation of lofty conceptions and the development of such habits of thought and action as are calculated to be conducive to that end are set forth by him in his discourse as essentials of good education. (For a detailed discussion on the theory, see *Education in Muslim India*, pp. 175 ff).

\* For a fuller information on the subject, *vide Education in Muslim India; Promotion of Learning in India*, by N.N. Law; and *Ancient Indian Education*, by Dr. Keay.

## CHAPTER V

### ARCHITECTURE

Wherever the Musalmāns established their sway, whether in Asia, Africa or Europe, they evinced a great passion for erecting beautiful buildings, capable of perpetuating their names. Under their care and patronage the cultural development of the countries they conquered received a most powerful stimulus and as a natural result of free intercourse between the rulers and the ruled, Islām was able to evolve for itself a new culture, embracing a new style of architecture especially adapted to its social and religious requirements.

The early Muslim rulers of India were too busy with the work of conquest to allow them time to indulge in artistic fancy. They therefore adapted their needs to the existing architecture. But as soon as they succeeded in securing their authority, they as well as their successors began to devote their minds and money to the construction of magnificent monuments worthy of their fame. Says Sir John Marshall, the greatest living authority on the subject :—

Monuments of  
Early Muslim  
Period.



"By the close of the twelfth century, then, when the Muslims established their power permanently in India, it was no longer a case of their having to be tutored by their new subjects in the art of building; they themselves were already possessed of a highly developed architecture of their own, as varied and magnificent as the contemporary architecture of Christian Europe; and the Muslims, moreover, who conquered India — men of Afghān, Persian and Turkī blood — were endowed with a remarkably good taste and a natural talent for building. The picture that some writers have drawn of them as wild and semi-barbarous hillmen, descending on an ancient and vastly superior civilization, is far from the truth."\*

The most magnificent monuments of the reign of Qutb-ud-Dīn Aibak are Buildings of the *Qurwat-ul-Islām* mosque Qutb-ud-Dīn. founded by him in 1191 A.C. at Delhi to commemorate the capture of that place and the far-famed *Qutb Mīnār* erected by him there to perpetuate the memory of the famous saint, Qutb-ud-Dīn, popularly known as Qutb Shāh. The mosque was subsequently enlarged and improved by other kings. The most outstanding feature of this sacred structure is the screen of eleven-pointed arches, which has elicited the spontaneous admiration of Fergusson and other art critics. The *Mīnār* was started

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\* *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 569.

by Qutb-ud-Dīn Aibak and completed by Iltūtmish. Arabic inscriptions from the Holy *Qur-ān* and the various names of the Almighty, indicating the essentially sacred character of the column, and the panegyrics of the kings who built it and of those who repaired and renovated it are the only ornaments of this cylindrical structure, 'the loftiest and the most beautiful of its class in the world.' It appears that it was intended to serve as *Ma'zina* (place from where the call for prayers is offered) of the *Quwwat-ul-Islām* mosque, of which it formed a portion.

The *Arhāi din kā Jhaunprā* (two-and-a-half days' hut)\* at Ajmer was —, Iltūtmish. originally erected by Aibak and later on adorned with a beautiful screen by Iltūtmish. Other notable buildings associated with the name of Iltūtmish are the *Hauz-i-Shamsi* and the *Shamsi Idgāh*, built while he was governor of Badāon (1203—1209). The tomb wherein he lies buried is also a fine piece of architecture.

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\* The story runs that the original building was erected by Aibak in two-and-a-half days and hence its name *Arhāi din kā Jhaunprā* or two-and-a-half days' hut. Such a superb structure as this is more likely to have taken as many years than days unless it was the result of a miracle. Another view is that it derived its name from a fair that was held there in Marhatta times for two-and-a-half days. (See *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 581).

According to Sir J. Marshall, 'Alā-ud-Dīn  
 -, 'Alā-ud-Dīn. was 'the author of buildings of  
 unexampled grace and nobility'.  
 He built the city of Sīrī, two miles north-west  
 of *Qil'a-i-Rāi-Pathora*.<sup>\*</sup> Among other monu-  
 ments of importance constructed by him may  
 be mentioned the Palace of *Hazār Satūn* (or  
 thousand pillars), the '*Alāi Darwāza*, 'one of the  
 most treasured gems of Islāmic architecture',  
 and the *Hauz-i-'Alāi* or the *Hauz-i-Khās*, so  
 famous in the history of Islāmic architecture.

The architecture of the Tughluq period is  
 characterized by simplicity and  
 -, Tughluq massiveness. This was probably  
 Sultāns. due to the fact that the Central  
 Government was hemmed in by the Mughals  
 and the hostile Hindū Rājas. The most typical  
 specimen of this style is the tomb of Tughluq  
 Shāh, which has survived to our own times and  
 stands near the old fort of Tughluqābād.

Muhammad Tughluq was possessed of  
 a rare genius, but his reign was  
 F i r o z too troubled to allow him leisure  
 Tughluq's to satisfy his architectural am-  
 Public bitions. It was left to his suc-  
 Works. cessor, Firoz Shāh, 'an indefatig-  
 able builder', to erect a number of cities, forts,  
 palaces, mosques, *Madrasas*, tombs, embank-  
 ments and other works of public welfare. He  
 founded the city of Firozābād, built two other

<sup>\*</sup> See Sir Sayyad's *Asūr-us-Sanādīd*, pp. 17-18.

cities, viz., Fatehābād and Hissār Firoza, and laid the foundations of yet another called Jaunpur. He also repaired and renovated many of the monuments that had crumbled or were in a state of decay for want of repairs. Of his innumerable magnificent monuments that have resisted the ravages of time, the most considerable is the Kotla Firoz Shāh, the palace-fort or citadel, which he erected within the city of Firozābād. Within the walls the best-preserved buildings are the *Jāmi Masjid*, an imposing edifice, having arcades and chambers on three sides of the ground-floor and a pillar of Asoka in front, and a 'pyramidal structure' crowned by the said pillar.\* Among other superb structures of his those that deserve specific mention are the college called *Madrasa-i-Firozshāh* and the tomb which he built for himself during his life-time on the site of 'Alā-ud-Dīn's *Hauz-i-Khās*. Two other monuments likely to interest an archæologist and an historian are the tombs of Khān-i-Jahān Tilangānī, the Prime Minister of the Sultān, situated a little to the south of the shrine of Nizām-ud-Dīn Auliyā, and the shrine of the saint, Kabīr-ud-Dīn Auliyā, locally known

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\* This pillar was brought from Tobra, a village in the Ambāla District, and planted there. Another pillar was brought from the vicinity of Meerut and set up in the *Kūshk-i-Shikār* Palace on the ridge. How these huge Asokan monoliths were lifted and shifted to Delhi was no mean feat of engineering, considering the crude mechanical appliances then available. Afif has given a graphic account of the transfer of these pillars in his *Tārīkh-i-Firozshāhī*.

as *Lāl Gumbad*. The buildings of Firoz Shah are noted for their simplicity, straightforwardness and austerity, which characterized their author. The virtues of this style reside in its simplicity and strength and in the purposefulness with which it brought into vogue new features or adapted old ones to its needs. In order to keep the style of his buildings in conformity with his canons of taste, Firoz appointed a financial officer called *Dīwān-i-Wizārat*, who carefully scrutinized the plan of every edifice designed by an architect.\*

The Sayyad and the Lodhī Kings, who inherited a shrunken empire with very feeble resources, could not give full expression to their architectural ambitions. Consequently the best examples of the buildings of their execution are the tombs of kings and nobles. Among the tombs of kings may be mentioned those of Mubārak Shāh (in Mubārakpur), Muhammad Shāh and Sikandar Lodhī at Delhi. Of the resting-places of nobles, the most prominent are those of Barā Khān and Chhote Khān, the *Barā Gumbad*, and the *Shīsh Gumbad*, the *Dādī kā Gumbad* and the *Polī kā Gumbad* as well as the tomb of Shahāb-ud-Dīn Tāj Khān. Attached to Tāj Khān's

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\* For a detailed account of Firoz Shāh's public works, etc., see Ferishta, Vol. I, pp. 465 ff.; Elliot, Vol. III, pp. 338 ff.; and *Tārikh-i-Firoz Shāhī* by Zia-ud-Dīn Barnī (B. I. S.), p. 562.

tomb is an open *Idgāh* (place for offering *Id* prayers) and to the *Barā Gumbad* an ornate mosque. Another, and far more imposing, mosque is the *Molī-kī-Masjid* built by the Prime Minister of Sikandar Shāh. It is by far the largest structure of its class built during that period, and it embodies all that is best and beautiful in the Lodhī architecture — beauty, dignity, decoration and a richer and more lavish display of ornamentation as compared to the Tughluq style.

It is a truism that Islāmic culture was, to a certain extent, bottled up within the confines of the Paramount Power enthroned at the Centre and the outlying provinces were enlightened only indifferently. But the downfall of the Sultānat of Delhi let loose the streams of artistic and intellectual energy to flow into those distant parts, which, under their independent rulers, developed a civilization of their own. These rulers found full scope for bringing into play the artistic talents they were endowed with and they made their own contributions to the life and thought of Islām in India. Under their patronage their kingdoms developed architectural styles of their own. Differ as they do in individual expression, the provincial schools of Islāmic architecture drew inspiration from the parent-stock and bear unmistakable resemblance to it in their lineage and lineaments.

Monuments in  
independent  
Kingdoms.

We begin with Sind and Multān which were the first to fall into the hands of the Musalmāns. Of the monuments, particularly mosques, built there during the Arab Rule, no vestige is now left. In Multān the oldest monuments are the tomb of Shāh Yūsuf Gardezī built in 1152, the resting-place of Bahā-ul-Haq, built in 1262, the tomb of Shams-ud-Dīn or Shams-i-Tabrez (often confused with his namesake of greater renown), and the shrines of Shādnā Shāhīd and Rukn-i-'Ālam. In Sind the best-preserved monuments are the tomb of Amīr Khalīl Khān, built in 1572, and that of Nawāb Amīr Khān, built in 1640. They show a great affinity to the artistic creations of Ghaznīn and are Persian in form and character.

In Kashmīr there are at present two important buildings whose origin goes back to the pre-Mughal period: One is the tomb of Mandanī, with a mosque attached to it. It was erected in 1444 A. C. in the reign of Sultān Zain-ul-'Abidīn. The other is the tomb of the mother of that Sultān, also erected during his reign (1342-70). The style of this structure is typically Saracenic. Among the wooden monuments constructed in Kashmīr during the pre-Mughal period, the *Jāmī Masjid* at Srinagar deserves specific mention. It was built by Sultān Sikandar Shāh (1390-1419), and enlarged by his son, Zain-ul-'Abidīn. It was built of brick, stone and

timber. Another equally interesting specimen of the wooden style is the mosque of Shāh Hamdān in Srīnagar. It is exclusively made of wood.

Among the magnificent monuments of —, Jaunpur. Jaunpur may be mentioned the *Atāla Masjid*, 'the most ornate and the most beautiful of all the mosques remaining in Jaunpur', constructed in the reign of Sultān Ibrāhīm; the *Jāmi Masjid*, erected under the patronage of Hussain Shāh; the *Lāl Darwāza Masjid*; the *Jhanjirī Masjid* and the *Khālīs Mukhlīs*. In style, the buildings of Jaunpur closely resemble those of the Tughluq period, with the difference that they are more ornate and chaste in many cases.

The rulers of Bengāl also showed a remarkable interest in architecture. Of —, Bengāl. the beautiful buildings erected by them at their capital, Gaur, the most outstanding are the tomb of Hussain Shāh, the *Barī Sone kī Masjid* (Grand Golden Mosque), the *Chhotī Sone kī Masjid* (Small Golden Mosque) and the *Qadam-i-Rasūl* built by Nusrat Shāh. The Grand Golden Mosque is a massive structure with a big corridor and the Small Golden Mosque too is a strongly built edifice 'carved inside and out with beautifully chiselled designs, including the Indian lotus'. But the most striking and superb structure is said to be the *Adinā Masjid*, built by Sikandar Shāh in 1368 A. C. at Pandua, about 20 miles



distant from Gaur. These and many more buildings are singularly picturesque and 'display all the features of a strongly marked individuality of style'.

Of all the provincial styles of architecture, the best and most beautiful, the most opulent and varied is that of Gujarāt. Ahmad Shāh built the city of Ahmadābād and beautified it with magnificent mosques, *Madrasas*, and mausoliums, the remains of which will linger long to justify one in endorsing the view that 'the city was one of the handsomest and most flourishing in Western India, and still ranks next to Agra and Delhi for the beauty and extent of its architectural remains', and that 'the noble mosques, colleges, palaces and tombs, the remains of which still adorn Ahmadābād and its other cities to this day, which excite the admiration of the traveller, prove both the wealth and the taste of the founders.' Of the excellent edifices erected at Ahmadābād during the spring-time of Gujarāt's independence, the *Jāmi Masjid* is perhaps the best in the East. It was built in 1424 with its 260 exquisitely carved columns. Another monument of great beauty, situated in the same city, is the *Masjid* of Muhāfiz Khān, built towards the close of the 14th century. According to J. Fergusson, 'It is the most exquisite gem of Ahmadābād.' The wealth of Islāmic culture is fully evidenced not only in the sacred

buildings, just referred to, but also in the group of public works of utility, such as step-wells, public orchards, water-reservoirs and irrigation works. Barbosa, a Portuguese traveller who visited Gujarāt in 1511-14 A. C., describes Ahmadābād as 'very rich and well-embellished with good streets and squares supplied with houses of stone and cement'. Bernier, who visited India during the reigns of Aurangzeb and Shāh Jahān, compared Ahmadābād with London in point of form and extent. In the 15th century a number of fine buildings were erected at Ahmadābād, Cambay, Baroach, Dolka and Mahmūdābād.

Mandū, the capital of Mālwa, was also famous for its buildings, mostly erected in the 15th century. Some of them have survived to our own times and testify to the tastes of their founders. The *Jāmi Masjid*, the *Jahāz Mahal*, the *Hindola Mahal*, the tomb of Hushang Shāh and the palaces of Sultān Bāz Bahādur and his beloved, Rūpinatī, may be mentioned among the most interesting and admirable of their class. These buildings bear a close resemblance to the architecture at Delhi.

The Bahmanīd Kings were gifted with a fine taste for architecture. The buildings extant at Kulbarga (capital of the Bahmanīd Kingdom) are but a moiety of the mass destroyed by the

ravages of time. The most noteworthy of the existing monuments is the mosque modelled on that of Cordova in Spain. It extends over an area of 38,016 square feet and is one of the most remarkable of its class in the country, at least in one respect—it has no open court, the whole of its area being covered over and light admitted through the sidewalls pierced with arches for the purpose on all sides excepting the west. The *Chānd Minār* at Daulatābād and the *Madrasa* of Mahmūd Gāwān at Bidār may be reckoned among the remaining edifices of importance. Kulbarga has two groups of architecture : one covering the tombs of ‘Alā-ud Dīn Hasan *Bahmanī*, Muhammad Shāh, Muhammad Shāh II and two other anonymous tombs of a later date ; and the other comprising what is collectively called *Haft Gumbad* (seven domes), containing the tombs of Mujāhid Shāh Dāūd Shāh, Prince Sanjar, Ghiyās-ud Dīn and his family and Firoz Shāh and his family. Two other edifices of note are the tomb of Ahmad Shāh and the *Sola Masjid*, both of which stand within the fort at Bidār. Among the monuments at Bijāpur, the finest is the resting-place of Muhammad ‘Adil Shāh, which is ‘popularly known as *Gol Gumbaz*.’ Other famous buildings that adorn that city are the *Gagan Mahal*, the *Asārī Mahal*, the *Satmanzala* (seven-storied structure) in the city and a small gateway known as *Mihluri Mahal*. The last two are highly elegant and profusely carved structures. The tomb of Qulī Qutb Shāh,

built at Golconda in 1625, 'is one of the largest and finest buildings in the Deccan'. As most of the Bahmanīd Kings and the kings of its off-shoots, *viz.*, Ahmadnagar, Bijāpur, Golconda, Bidār, and Berār professed Shīa' faith, the style of their architecture is mostly Persian.

The Mughals were the most remarkable builders of India. The beautiful buildings they constructed in different parts of the country still stand and serve as an imperishable index to their refined tastes and afford an excellent testimony to their cultural advancement. The style of their architecture, so wide and varied, was a medley of many influences—combining in itself all that was good in other styles from their point of view. It "was more sumptuous and decorative than the styles that preceded it, and its delicacy and ornamentation furnish a striking contrast to the massiveness and simplicity of the art of pre-Mughal days."

Bābar had a poor opinion of Indian art and skill. Therefore, for constructing his buildings he imported the pupils of Sinan, the famous architect from Constantinople. Most of his magnificent monuments have perished; the only two that have survived are the large mosque in the *Kābul Bāgh* at Pānīpat and the *Jāmi Masjid* at Sambhal.

Humāyūn's life was too unsettled to allow him time to give free and full scope to his æsthetic fancy. Instead of using marble, stone or brick in the construction of his buildings, he used wood right through and this is the most striking feature of his architecture. Of the wooden structures that he built, the most marvellous were the *Qasr-i-Rawān* (floating palace), the *Bazar i-Rawān* (floating bazar) and the *Bāgh-i-Rawān* (floating garden). These were built on boats and set afloat on the Jumna.\*

The Sūrs, who supplanted the Mughals for the time being, were remarkable builders. The two outstanding buildings of Sher Shāh's time are the *Qil'a Kohna* (old fort) near Delhi and the tomb of that mighty monarch at Sasrām. "The tomb is one of the best designed and most beautiful buildings in India, unequalled among the earlier buildings in the northern provinces for grandeur and dignity ..." The palace built in the citadel of Agra by Sher Shāh or his successor, Salīm Shāh, "was as exquisite a piece of decorative art as anything of its class in India." According to J. Fergusson, the historian of Indian architecture, "this palace must have gone far to justify the eulogium more than once passed on the works of these Pathāns

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\* For a somewhat detailed account and description of these wooden structures, see *The Mughal Empire From Bābar To Aurangzeb*, p. 42.

—that 'they built like giants and finished like goldsmiths'; for the stones seem to have been of enormous size and the details of most exquisite finish."\*

In Akbar the Great, the greatest exponent of Hindū Muslim unity, architecture, like other fine arts, found a most active and powerful patron. His buildings were characterized by unity of Hindū and Muslim styles, of which sometimes the one predominated and sometimes the other, so much so that Fatehpur Sīkrī, the nucleus of architectural splendour in the reign of Akbar, has been very aptly described as 'a reflex of the great mind of the man who built it'. Even his architecture speaks for his statesmanship, aiming at Hindū Muslim unity. Unfortunately many of his monuments were pulled down by his grandson, Shāh Jahān, whose canons of art differed from those of his own, yet a number of them have survived and bear eloquent testimony to his architectural tastes. The best of his buildings, in which red stone was liberally used, were erected at Fatehpur Sīkrī. They were the *Jāmi Masjid*, described as 'the glory of Fatehpur Sīkrī, scarcely surpassed by any of its class in India, perhaps in the world', the shrine of Shaikh Salīm Chishtī, the *Līwan* or the service portion of the Great Mosque at Fatehpur Sīkrī, the *Satī Burj*, immortalizing the self-immolation of a wife

\* James Fergusson's *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, pp. 572—73.

of Rāja Bihārī Mal, the house of Rāja Bīr Bal, the *Sonhla Makān* or the Palace of the Princess of Ambar, the Palace of Jodhābāī, the Palace of the Turkish Sultāna and the *Khawābgāh*. Everything considered, the Town of Victory (Fatehpur Sīkrī) is, to borrow Dr. Smith's phrase, a romance in stone, inconceivable and impossible at any other time or in any other circumstances. Among the monuments of importance built outside Fatehpur Sīkrī, may be mentioned the tomb of Humāyūn, the most Persian in style and noted for the simplicity and purity of its design; Akbar's tomb at Sikandara, a unique structure among the sepulchres of Asia, the Jahāngīrī Mahal, the *Diwān-i-'Am*, the *Diwān-i-Khās*, with its beautiful pillar and four galleries, within the Agra Fort; the magnificent mosque at Mirthā in Rājputāna and the Hall of Forty Pillars at Allāhābād.

Jahāngīr's interest centred mainly round painting and gardening, yet his —, Jahāngīr. reign was not without its architectural glory. His wife, Nūr Jahān, built at Agra the beautiful tomb of her father, I'timād-ud-Daula, which is the finest architectural gem of Jahāngīr's reign. Referring to this tomb, Mr. Percy Brown writes in *The Cambridge History of India* :

"There is no other building like it in the entire range of Mughul architecture, the delicacy of treatment and the chaste quality of its

decoration placing it in a class by itself ..... Whether regarded as an architectural composition of matchless refinement, as an example of applied art displaying rare craftsmanship, or as an artistic symbol of passionate filial devotion, the tomb of I'timād-ud-daula expresses in every part of it the high æsthetic ideals that prevailed among the Mughuls at the time".\*

Another notable monument of Jahāngīr's reign is the tomb of that emperor himself at Lāhore, built by his beautiful consort, Nūr Jahān. This tomb and the tombs of Nūr Jahān and Asaf Khān were damaged by the Sikhs during the Sikh rule, when Ranjīt Singh removed their marble and employed it in the construction of his own buildings.†

Under Shāh Jahan's patronage decorative —, Shāh Jahān. architecture attained to its highest watermark. In the construction of his buildings he made a most extensive use of marble and the *pectra dura*, which characterized the architecture of Nūr Jahān and, employing the services of the jeweller and the painter, produced those specimens of art which still stand unrivalled in India, perhaps in the whole world. In this hurried survey we cannot enter

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\* *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, pp. 552 and 553.

† *Ibid.*, p. 551; and *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, by Ishwari Prasad, p. 759.



into the canons of this art or study the tastes of their author, nor can we attempt a description of the buildings he erected. The *Tāj* alone would require a volume to itself were we to attempt only a description of it. Erected to the memory of his beloved consort at Agra, this Queen of Architecture is and will continue to be the finest monument of conjugal love and fidelity. It is Musalmāns' noblest contribution to the grace of Indian womanhood — 'the *Venus de Milo* of the East'. The view that it was designed by a foreigner is wholly unfounded and absurd. The theory of its foreign origin is knocked down by contemporary historical accounts\* as well as by the internal evidence of the building itself. The *Motī Masjid* (Pearl Mosque), situated within the Agra Fort and described as 'the purest and loveliest house of prayer in the world'; the *Diwān-i-Khās*, rightly regarded by Shāh Jahān as a paradise on earth; the *Diwān-i-'Am*, with an exquisitely ornamented ceiling, supported by profusely decorated pillars, an excellent niche in the middle and a marble platform which was once the seat of the far-famed Peacock Throne; the gorgeous *Rang Mahal*, with its garden court; the most marvellous Baths fed by a canal brought from the Jumna; and the *Jāmi Masjid* at Delhi are the finest monuments, immortalizing the memory of that Great Mughal. None can fully appreciate the beauty and grandeur of these and other

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\* See *Pādshāhnāma*, Vol. II, p. 3.

buildings without paying a visit to them and seeing them with his own eyes. According to Mr. Percy Brown, "even the most ardent flatterer, trained in poetical analogies, could hardly do justice to the surpassing beauty of some of these structures, which in spite of vicissitudes still hold their own as the most elegant of their kind."\* Can there be a soul that will not be stirred to its depths or fall into ecstasies at the awe-inspiring sight of that master-piece of Mughal architecture called the *Taj*?

The most important buildings erected by Aurangzeb are the Marble Mosque, Aurangzeb. within the Fort of Delhi and the *Bādshahī Masjid* at Lahore. The latter is the latest specimen of the Mughal style of architecture. It has lost most of its original beauty and splendour, but even as it is, it is an excellent piece of art. Efforts are being made to renovate it and to restore it to its original form.

Most of the monuments enumerated above and others that have not found Their Cultural Importance. place in this account for want of space have survived to our own times. Though most of them have lost much of their original grace and elegance, yet there is enough in these living lips to tell the tale of their splendour and to testify to the cultural

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\* *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 554.

greatness of their authors. They are standing cultural influences: A visit to them is full of pleasure and profit. Artists come from far and wide and draw inspiration from them. They are also a great incentive in forming and developing the tastes of thousands of our countrymen. Some of the floral designs, decorating their walls, have been successfully copied and worked into articles of dress for men as well as women. Their economic importance lies in the fact that they provided employment to a large number of hands. Buildings that normally took decades for completion must have absorbed a vast amount of labour and fed a large number of mouths, besides affording a powerful stimulus to artistic ingenuity and skill. The money spent on them was not wasted, as is too often supposed. It was, at least, better utilized than that spent on military operations.

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In passing, a short reference may also be made to sculpture, bas-reliefs and tile-work which are so closely connected with architecture. Following the example of Persian Kings, the Muslim rulers of India, especially the Great Mughals, sought the aid of the sculptor's (quite as much as of the painter's) art for the beautification of their buildings, palaces and pleasantries. The two full length marble statues

of elephants,\* with riders† mounted on them, set up at Agra by Jahāngīr to commemorate his victory over the Rāna of Mewār, bear valuable testimony to the successful efforts of the sculptors of Mughal India. They exacted the following tribute from the French traveller, Bernier, who visited them in the seventeenth century:—

“These two large elephants, mounted by the two heroes, have an air of grandeur, and inspire me with an awe and respect which I cannot describe.”†

The *Serai* of Nūr Mahal in the Punjab, built also in the reign of Jahāngīr, is remarkable for its exquisitely sculptured front. The north and west sides of the inner wall of the Fort at Lāhore display ‘unique tile work’, also attributed to the reign of the same emperor. They are embellished with geometrical and foliated designs, figures of living beings, *etc.* We have the

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\* In 1668 A. C. Aurangzeb removed these elephants to Delhi, where they were preserved in the public gardens and subsequently repaired; “but,” according to Ishwari Prasad, “no trace is to be found of them now.” (*Vide I. G. I.*, Vol. II, p. 132; *Keene's Hand-book to Delhi*, App. A; and *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 502-3).

† These riders are said to be the Rāna of Mewār and his son.

‡ Quoted from *Bernier's Travels in I. G. I.*, Vol. II, p. 132.

following account of it in *The Imperial Gazetteer of India* :—

“Many of the scenes represented possess also considerable historical interest, illustrating the life of the Mughal emperors. Several specimens represent elephant fights which were one of the chief recreations of the Mughal Court, and one of the finest panels shows four horsemen playing Chaugān or Persian polo”.\*

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\* *I. G. I.*, Vol. II, p. 132. The account of Islamic architecture given in this chapter is at best the barest of all brief sketches. The more inquisitive reader should seek detailed information on the subject in such standard works as Fergusson's *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, *The Cambridge History of India* (Vols. III and IV), *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, *The Archaeological Survey of India* and the works of such scholars as Sir A. Cunningham, Dr. Smith, Sir Sayyad Ahmad Khan, Havell, Burgess, Carr Stephen, Fanshawe, Keene, etc., catalogued at the end of this book. But the fullest satisfaction of his curiosity would necessitate a veritable pilgrimage to the deserted shrines referred to in this chapter and described in other works at some length.

## CHAPTER VI

### GARDENING

India has all along been famous for the abundance and variety of flowers, fruits and foliage, which have occupied an important place in the scheme of religious as well as social life of her people. The use of flowers and flower garlands on such occasions as marriage and death is too well-known to call for a special comment. Flowers and flower wreaths were offered as gifts on all social functions and festive occasions. It was impossible to think of a newly married couple or their bed without fine and fragrant flowers. Likewise, it was impossible to imagine a bier unadorned with flower wreaths. Special sanctity attached to such flowers as *Tulsī* because of being intimately associated with religious worships and offerings. Anir Khusrau and Malik Muhammad Jaisi have devoted full chapters of their books to the description of flowers and gardens of pre-Mughal India. Naturally enough, the art of gardening was understood and cultivated in India long before the Great Mughals appeared there and made their own contributions to this art.\*

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\* J. A. S. B. (1935), Vol. I, pp. 201-2 and 332.

Musalmāns were almost invariably very fond of natural beauty.\* Their Muslims' love of natural beauty. love of it found expression in several ways: At times they would go to distant places in quest of natural beauty, undertaking arduous journeys, entailing untold troubles and expenses; while at other times, they would endure even greater hardships and bear heavier expenses in bringing beauty to places formerly devoid of it. The visits of the Mughal Emperors to Kashmīr are the best instances of search for natural beauty, while the creation of such beauty-spots in India as the Shālāmār Garden at Lāhore illustrates the bringing of beauty to barren places.† It need not occasion surprise if under their care and patronage a number of waste lands were transformed into smiling gardens. It may also be noted here that architecture played an important part in the development of gardening in India. A building, however exquisite and excellent in other respects, was not considered to be complete if it had no garden of sweet-smelling flowers and foliage. Whenever, therefore, a Muslim king, or noble or other man of means erected a beautiful building, he provided it with an equally beautiful garden, befitting its architectural dignity.

\* "They had an eye for the beauties of natural scenery and knew how to lay out their gardens with terraced rose-trees and channels of running water". (*History of India*, by Thomas).

† J. R. S. A. (January, 1936), p. 237. The letters  
(See page 115).

Before giving an account of the gardens laid out by the Muslim Kings, we consider it worth while to make a short reference to the flowers that grew there. Among the most famous flowers of the day Amīr Khusrau enumerates the following: *Banaṣṣha*, *Yasaman* and *Nasarīn* which were of foreign origin, being introduced from Persia, and others which were of Indian origin, viz., *Baila*, *Kevra*, *Champa*, *Molsirī*, *Sevtrī*, *Damra*, *Karma* and *Laung*. Among other flowers, which were originally Indian but were given Persian names by Muslims, he mentions *Gul-i-Kūza*, *Gul-i-Sadbarg* and *Qaranfal* or *Laung*, and challenges those who do not agree with him to prove their foreign extraction. He is perfectly justified

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of Allāma Abul Fazl, Akbar's confidential friend and courtier, contain some interesting details of the journeys of that Great Mughal from Agra to Kashmīr, undertaken mainly in order to enjoy the wonderful scenery and greenery of that 'loveliest valley of the world'. Akbar was so much impressed by the beauties of Kashmīr that he made it the summer-seat of his government and loved to live in it — a precedent which was followed by his successors who too had no other object in view than to enjoy the beauties of nature so lavishly bestowed on that part of the earth. Akbar, we are told, used to spend the summer season there and every time he used to take a new route, accompanied by royal paraphernalia — household, courtiers, troops, sappers and miners — so that no beauty-spot of Kashmīr should be left unseen. The duty of the sappers and miners was to go in advance and make roads where no roads existed before. (*Vide J. R. S. A. January, 1936, p. 237*).



in saying that Hindustān has suffered a great deal on account of undue modesty in this respect; 'for if Syria and Greece were in possession of such a treasure, they would have trumpeted out their pride and glory all over the world.\*

The gardens, a brief account of which will presently follow, were not only  
 4 Famous Fruits. full of flowers, but were equally full of fruit trees. Among the most famous fruits that were successfully grown in the gardens laid out by Muslim Kings and other men of means may be mentioned grapes, pomegranates, mangoes, apples, apricots, bananas, oranges, almonds besides a number of other fruits whose name is legion and a long story in telling. An old manuscript, containing hand-painted illustrations of fruits, fruit plants and fruit trees, both indigenous and imported, has come down to us and is said to have been prepared in the reign of Jāhāngīr, presumably at his instance, because he was exceedingly fond of horticulture.† Among the trees, which bore no fruits but were planted for ornamentation only, may be mentioned cypress and *Chinār* trees which are frequently referred to in the poetry of the period. The Mughals were so fond of them that no Mughal garden was without some, if not many. Some of the cypress trees,

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\* J. A. S. B. (1935), Vol. I, p. 332.

† J. R. S. A. (Jan., 1936), p. 238.

of that period have survived in India as well as in Afghānistān. No proof of this is required in India where every surviving Mughal garden has a number of cypress trees ; but so far as Afghānistān is concerned, we can cite at least one instance: Nimla, which is situated half way between Jalālābād and Kābul and is described as 'a miniature Oriental Versailles', is believed to have been a Mughal garden and the beautiful cypress trees that stand there as memorials of Mughal times are said to have been planted there by Jahāngīr and his beloved consort, Nūr Jahān. \*

When the Musalmāns first appeared in India they brought with them their own ideas of gardening. They made full use of the fertility and extent of the land, which conquest placed at their disposal, and planted numerous gardens all over the country according to their own tastes. They seem to have taken great pains to improve the system of gardening in India and succeeded to a considerable extent. Kaiqubād laid out 'a magnificent garden' at Kalugarhi (a few miles outside Delhi), and gardens and terraced-walks were laid out there when Jalāl-ud-Dīn Khiljī made it his temporary residence before entering Delhi for political reasons. It was Firoz Shāh Tughluq who carried out a most extensive programme of

Pre-Mughal  
Gardens.

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\* *Beyond the Khyber Pass*, pp. 119-20.

planting gardens. According to his historian, he laid out not less than 1,200 gardens in and about Delhi, 80 on the Salora embankment and 44 in Chitor. Rājputāna maintained and even extended the traditions of gardening outside its area. Besides Chitor, Dholpur, Gwālior and Jodhpur, other places also took to gardening and achieved remarkable success in the art. Dholpur was noted for its gardens which shaded the route to the city to a distance of 7 *Krohs* (= about 14 miles). Jodhpur was famous for its pomegranates which, according to Sultān Sikandar Lodhī, surpassed those of Persia in flavour.\*

Unfortunately, we do not possess any connected account of the contributions made by the independent Muslim rulers of the outlying provincial kingdoms to the cause of fine arts, but there are many stray references in the contemporary records to show that they were highly interested in their advance. They were very fond of gardens, a number of which appear to have been laid out by them in their kingdoms at great cost, mostly in order to adorn their buildings. The gorgeous gardens of Golconda, Gujarāt, Badāon, *etc.*, occasioned the astonishment as well as admiration not only of native visitors but of

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\* *J. A. S. B.* (1935), Vol. I, p. 201; and *M. U. J.* (July, 1931), p. 130.

European and other foreign travellers as well.\*

When the Great Mughals came and conquered India and consolidated their power there, they carried the art of gardening, like other fine arts, to the highest pitch ever attained by it before. There are repeated references to gardens and fruits and flowers in the accounts of the contemporary chroniclers. Among the gardens laid out by Bābar, the illustrious founder of the Mughal Dynasty in India, may be mentioned the *Bāgh-i-Wafā* and the *Bāgh-i-Kilan* near Kābul and the *Rām Bāgh* and the *Zohra Bāgh* at Agra as the most sumptuous and outstanding. Humāyūn's name is associated with a floating garden, the first of its kind, built on the Jumna like other wooden structures.† Under Akbar the Great the city of Fatehpur Sīkrī rose to be a great garden city. The *Nasīm Bāgh* in Kashmīr survives to this day as a monument to his memory and is still a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. Jahāngīr was the greatest gardener among the Great Mughals. "His principal delight was in the laying out of large formal gardens, the romantic beauty of which has contributed not a little to the æsthetic reputation of the Mughul dynasty

\* See Franklin's *Shāh 'Alam*, p. 57; Tavernier's *Travels*, Vol. I, p. 124; and J. A. S. B., (1935), Vol. I, pp. 201-02.

† See *The Mughal Empire From Bābar To Aurangzeb*, p. 42.

.....Through Jahāngīr's love of nature, inherited from his progenitor Bābar, the Mughul garden was brought to perfection and at all places where this emperor sojourned for any length of time one of these pleasancess (gardens) was generally prepared".\* It is to him that we owe the *Dilkushā* Garden (Shāh Dara) and the *Bādāmī Bāgh*† at Lāhore; the *Nishāt Bāgh*, the *Shalāmār Bāgh*, the *Achūbal Bāgh* and the *Verīnāg Bāgh* in Kashmīr; the Royal Garden at Udaipur; the garden attached to the tomb of I'īmād-ud-Daula at Agra; and the *Wah Bāgh* at Hasan Abdāl. He was especially interested in horticulture and was particularly keen on acquiring knowledge and collecting information about trees, plants, fruits and flowers, a number of which he is reputed to have imported into India from outside. Some of the *Sarv* and *Chinār* trees, planted by him, have survived to our own times. Though Shāh Jahān's æsthetic fancy mainly centred round architecture, he was no less interested in gardens which were indispensable for the ornamentation of his beautiful buildings. The *Shalāmār Bāgh* at Lāhore, the gardens

\* *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, pp. 548-49. Jahāngīr's example was followed by his courtiers and others who too built similar retreats in various places in India. Asaf Khān's *Nishāt Bāgh* in Kashmīr is the best case in point. (*Ibid.*, p. 549).

† *Bādāmī Bāgh* is a quarter in Lāhore and is so called because of the almond trees successfully planted there by Jahāngīr. (*Vide J. R. S. A.*, Jan., 1936, p. 238).

in the Delhi Fort, the *Tāj Mahal* Gardens at Agra, the *Shālāmār* Garden at Delhi and *Dārā Shikoh's* Garden in Kashmir were the most voluptuous of their class in Mughal India. Among the best gardens of the reign of Aurangzeb may be mentioned the garden attached to the *Badshāhī Masjid* at Lāhore, the garden of Raushan Arā Begum at Delhi, the *Chauburjī Bāgh* and the *Nawānkal Bāgh* at Lāhore; and the Pinjor Garden. The later Mughals were even more devoted to the fine arts than their predecessors: They indulged in them even to the neglect of State affairs. Under them the Mughal garden retained its splendour undiminished.\*

The gardens of the Great Mughals have provided a subject about which  
 Their chief                      it is always safe to speak in  
 Features                      superlatives. Even the names  
 given to them were significantly symbolic and suggestive. The name *Nishāt Bāgh* or Garden of Gladness cannot, for instance, fail to convey the idea that gladness must have reigned supreme in that beauty-spot. Likewise, the names 'Life-giving Garden', 'Moonlight Garden' and 'Garden of Dreams' at once bring before our mind's eye the glories of the gardens of Muslim

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\* *Gardens of the Great Mughals* by C. M. V. Stuart; *The Mughal Empire From Bābar To Aurangzeb*, pp. 29-30, 174-76, 216-18, 278 and 374; *J. R. S. A.* (January, 1936), pp. 237-38; and *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, pp. 548-49.

India. The idea underlying those gardens was in fact the creation of an *Iram* (paradise) and the realization of that object on earth. With high-walled enclosures, redolent with fragrant flowers, gaily plumaged birds, a captured stream running through the garden in rhythmic harmony, arching trees sheltering the spring flowers, a tank in the middle reflecting the flower-beds around and the scenes surrounding it on its transparent surface, the charming nightingales chirping and wooing the fully bloomed roses, and decently dressed *howrics* and *ghilmāns* (pages) moving about — the legendary paradise was fully attained and nothing beautiful that could be conceived by human mind seems to have been left wanting. Symmetry was the key-note of the Mughal art of gardening and the guiding principle of Mughal gardeners. Balance, harmony and precision were evident everywhere in the Mughal gardens. Glimpsing this spectacular glamour through a half-opened gate, how many mortals must have divined the words of Sa'dī's famous couplet "If there is a paradise on earth, it is here, it is here!"\*

The love of gardening displayed by the Muslim Kings, particularly the Legacy of the Great Mughals, Mughal Emperors, had an enduring impression on the taste of the people of India, Hindūs as well as Musalmāns.

\* For a detailed account of Mughal gardens, *vide* *Gardens of the Great Mughals* by C. M. V. Stuart.

This taste, we are glad to note, has received a fresh stimulous at the hands of the English who too have an eye for the beauties of nature as evidenced in their gardens.\*

Unfortunately, most of the gardens, where once the *Bulbuls* sang so sweetly the songs of Mughal splendour, 'have been given over to cultivation' and a good many more have died out for want of care and cultivation. Yet there is enough in the remnants to indicate the tastes of their founders and the splendour that surrounded them. Space has been specifically allotted to the gardens of those times in this book not only because they reveal the refined side of Muslim rule and bring out the cultural influence they exerted on man's mind, enabling it to 'appreciate the wonderful handiwork of nature in trees and blossoms, in flowers and fruits', but also because they have exercised on literature an influence which has not so far been duly appreciated. There are a number of poems in Indo-Persian literature that were inspired by the gardens in Kashmīr, Lāhore and elsewhere. A most popular couplet in Persian, composed by a Mughal princess, drew its inspiration from the picturesque scenery presented by the fascinating waterfall at the centre of the *Shālāmār Bāgh* at Lāhore. The princess was enjoying the sparkling water on

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\* J. R. S. A. (January, 1936), p. 238.



the *Ābshār* descending on the slope of marble, forming the artificial fall, and was all ear to the sound so produced when the following verses came to her lips :

*"Ai ābshār nauhāgar az bahr-i-kistī  
Sar dar nigūn figanda ze andoh-i-kistī  
Āyā chī dard būd ki chūn mā tamām shab  
Sar rā ba sang mizadī-o-migiristī"*

It is impossible to transfuse the spirit of this piece of poetry into any other language. Its best available English translation is :—

"Whose absence, O Waterfall are thou  
lamenting so loudly ?  
Why has thou cast down thy head in  
grief ?  
How acute was thy pain that throughout  
the night,  
Restless, like me, thou wast striking thy  
head against the stone and shedding  
tears profusely" !\*

This influence has filtered down to our own times and benefited our modern poets. Many of the poems of our beloved poet, the late *Allama* Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, were inspired by the natural beauty of the gardens at Srinagar and Lahore.

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\*See "*The Cultural Influences of Islam in India*" by Sir Abdul Qadir in J.R.S.A., (Jan., 10, 1936), p. 238.

## CHAPTER VII

### P A I N T I N G

The art of painting did not receive the attention and encouragement which other arts did at the hands of the early Muslim kings of India. This was mainly because it was tabooed in the early days of Islām on account of its close association with idolatry. It was only occasionally that the Muslim kings and nobles broke away from the general convention and practised this art,\* but in view of the fact that a large number of Hindūs, among whom painting had long been popular, had embraced Islām but had not given up their old habits and hobbies altogether, it may reasonably be conceded that the art was not neglected by the then Muslims of India quite as much as it is believed to have been: A large majority of the new Muslims and their descendants must have resorted to it, and the Muslims who came from outside and

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\* For instance, Sultān Jalāl-ud-Dīn Fīroz Khiljī had to fix his residence for some time at Kalugarhi (some miles outside Delhi), where the Muizzī Castle was repaired and "embellished with paintings" (*M. U. J.*, July, 1931, p. 131). This is perhaps for the first time that we hear of paintings in a Muslim building during the Muslim Period of Indian history.

had imbibed Persian ideas and inspirations must also have pursued this art though not quite so zealously and with the same object as their contemporary Hindūs did. Thus it appears that while the rulers were indifferent, if not actually averse to it, the people in general cultivated it to a great extent.

The Mughals, however, stood on a different footing: They had their own ideas about art, which they loved and patronized in all its forms and phases. Bābar brought with him all the choicest specimens of painting which he was able to obtain from the library of his ancestors—the Tīmūrids—, who were noted for their love of and proficiency in the art of painting. Those specimens were treasured by the Mughal Emperors of India as their most precious and proud possessions. Some of them were transported to Persia by Nādir Shāh after his invasion of India and occupation of Delhi; but as long as they remained in India they were an inexhaustible source of inspiration for the painter and gave a great impetus to the art of painting in this country.\*

When Bābar became the master of India, the star of Bihzād, the best painter of Persia under the Tīmūrids, was at its zenith and the Chaghtāi princes and

Bihzādiān  
School and its  
influence.

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\**The Mughal Empire From Bābar To Aurangzeb*, p. 29.

peers set him before the painters of India as the model to be followed by them in their art. Thus Bihzād\* and his school became the exemplars of Indian artists and the elements of Persian painting engrafted themselves on Indian art traditions. In order to appreciate and enjoy the creations of the Indo-Mughal School of Painting, it is necessary to know the chief characteristics of the parent-stock (Bihzāadian School) which had a direct influence on its evolution in India. Born and cradled in the courts of Changez Khān and Tīmūr, the greatest conquerors of their age, the art of the Bihzāadian School was bound to be manly and vigorous. Naturally enough, the scenes of battles and sieges with their usual accompaniments, such as the brandishing and crossing of swords, the breaking of shields *etc.*, of gladiatorial combats, elephant and camel fights and chariot-racing, of hunt and battues figure most frequently in the productions of that period.† But it would be wrong to suppose that the art was devoid of softness and sentiments, for chivalry and romance—scenes of love-making, Laila and Majnūn,

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\* Bihzād was born about the middle of the fifteenth century. In course of time he rose to be the court-painter of Mansūr ibn Baiqara, the Tīmūrid King of Khorāsān. In 1506 A. C. he migrated from Herāt and took service under Shāh Ismāʿīl Safavī and remained in his service till his death in 1526 A. C., residing mostly at Tabrez.

† See *Bihzād And His Paintings in the Zafar-nāmah Ms.* by Sir Thomas Arnold.

Shirīn and Farhād, youths and maidens dallying in gardens by the side of a stream, of gorgeous reception of foreign embassies in royal courts, of feasts and festive functions, where wine passes freely round, where dainty dishes are served and where toothsome viands are spread in abundance—are depicted equally well and in plenty. Of piety and mysticism too, there is no dearth, “for in that curious age of self-abandonment the transformation from the intense pleasures of life to the rigorous discipline of saint-hood was never difficult: the *Shāh* (king) and *Gadā* (beggar) were the two poles between which the individual constantly moved. The Sultān of to-day may be the *Darwish* of tomorrow, nay the king was always ascetic at heart. Hence the frequency of the scenes where the *Darwish* is depicted: the *Darwish* living in wild forests and lonely caves, the *Darwish* as the miraculous master leading fierce animals like lambs, and the *Darwish* dancing in the ecstasy of mystic joy. Then like every age of romance, conquest and mystery, this age was greatly interested in the supernatural and the marvellous. Genii, goblins, monsters and fairies moved amidst men as common well-known, familiar figures. They were the stock-in-trade of the story-teller and the painter.”\* But the most distinguishing feature of the paintings of that period was the stamp of individualism they bore. In all scenes

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\* *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 268.

their constituent parts—men and women, birds and beasts, fruits and flowers, arms and instruments, *etc.*—, are so clearly drawn and so cleverly rendered that there is absolutely no confusion, no melee, so much so that even in a scene depicting the thick of a fight the warriors or their weapons do not get confused, nor do the dancers get mixed up promiscuously in a musical performance. Even the leaves of trees are so skillfully done that one can count them without difficulty despite their number. Drapery is treated with such remarkable skill and with such ease and grace that the outlines of the body are clearly brought out through it. In India these themes found a most congenial soil under the Mughal Kings, who were the direct descendants of Tīmūr and Changez Khān. There the interest in individuality grew apace with the growth of the Mughal School and became so marked in course of time that painting became predominantly portraiture—but “portraiture of such amazing cleverness that it became itself a marvel ”.\*

Humāyūn's interest in painting.	Bābar, the first representative of the Bihzādian School in India, did not live long to develop all that he wanted to do in this country. His unfortunate son, Humāyūn, had a most unsettled reign, during which it was impossible for him to indulge in his artistic fancy.
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\* *Ibid.*

But he was Bābar's son and had inherited his father's tastes and temperament. He developed a fine taste for painting during his exile in Persia after his expulsion from India by Sher Shāh Sūrī and on his return to India he brought with him two master-painters of the neo-Persian School of Painting, viz., Mīr Sayyad Alī Tabrezi and Khwāja Abdus Samad, so that they might prepare for him a fully illustrated version of the *Dāstān-i-Amīr Hamza*. The creatures of the brush of these two painters must have exerted a great influence on the art of painting in India. We also learn that both Humāyūn and his little son, Akbar, received lessons in drawing and showed a great interest in painting.\*

The glories of the art were reserved for Akbar the Great and his immediate successors. It was largely Akbar's attitude towards painting and a change in Muslim conception of this art. during Akbar's reign that Muslim conception of painting underwent such a radical change that the art, hitherto held in derision as being an aid to idolatry, began to receive active attention and encouragement on the ground that it taught the existence of God and strengthened belief in Him. Akbar, who, in common with other Chaghtai Princes, had inherited a remarkable æsthetic taste and developed it during his early days, thus expressed his views on the art of painting :—

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\* A Short History of Muslim Rule in India, p. 764.

“There are many that hate painting, but such men I do not like. It seems to me that a painter has, as it were, peculiar means of recognizing God; for he, in painting anything that has life and in devising its limbs, one after the other, is ultimately convinced that he cannot bestow individuality on his creation and is thus forced to think of God, the giver of life”.\*

Thus putting the art on a safe and strong footing by removing the stigma of sacrilege attached to it, Akbar the Great gave the first definite impulse to what afterwards came to be called the Mughal School of Painting. He founded and endowed a State Gallery where painters came from far and wide to emulate one another with a view to excel in the art. Under his instructions the architectural monuments of Fatehpur Sīkrī were decorated with paintings of unparalleled splendour, in which elegance was added to beauty in due proportions. The Town of Victory now lies in ruins, but the mural decorations of its beautiful buildings still stand as splendid specimens of the art of painting produced under its Imperial patron. The most prominent painters who flourished at the Imperial Court were Sayyad Alī Tabrezi, Daswant, Barwān, Khwāja Abdus-Samad and

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\* See *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, pp 765-66.



Desū. The progress of painting under Akbar is beautifully depicted by *Allāma* Abul Fazl in the following words :—

“ His Majesty from his earliest youth has shown a great predilection for the art, and gives it every encouragement, as he looks upon it as a means both of study and amusement. Hence the art flourishes, and many painters have obtained great reputation. The works of all painters are weekly laid before His Majesty by the Daroghas and the clerks; he then confers rewards according to the excellence of workmanship, or increases monthly salaries. Much progress was made in the commodities required by painters, and the correct prices of such articles were carefully ascertained. The mixture of colours has especially been improved. The pictures thus received a hitherto unknown finish. Many excellent painters are now to be found and master-pieces worthy of a Bilzad may be placed by the side of the wonderful works of the European painters who have obtained world-wide fame. The minuteness in detail, the general finish, the boldness of execution *etc.*, now observed in pictures are incomparable; even inanimate objects look as if they had life. More than a hundred painters have become famous masters of the art, whilst the number of those who approach perfection or of those who are modicres is very large. This is especially true of the Hindus; their pictures surpass our conception of things. Few

indeed in the world are equal to them.”\*

Jahāngīr, “the Prince of Artists”, was a most fastidious critic of art.† He gave a fresh impetus to the Mughal School of Painting founded by his father and raised its standard considerably high. His appreciation and encouragement carried the art of Indian painter to nothing short of perfection. “In his times,” says Catrou, “there were found in the Indies native painters who copied the finest of our European pictures with a fidelity that might vie with the originals.‡ One of Sir Thomas Roe’s presents to the Great Mughal was

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\* *Ain i-Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 107, and *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol., II, pp. 129-30.

† Of his skill in judging the value of portraits he informs us: “As regards myself, my liking for painting and my practice in judging it have arrived at such a point that when any work is brought to me, either of the deceased artists or those of the present day, without the names being told me, I say on the spur of the moment that it is the work of such and such a man. And if there be a picture containing many portraits, and each face be the work of a different master, I can discover which face is the work of each of them. If any other person has put in the eye and eyebrow of a face, I can perceive whose work the original face is, and who has painted the eyes and eyebrow.” Even after making considerable allowance for exaggeration, the fact remains that Jahāngīr “possessed the skilled knowledge of an expert.” (See *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, by Ishwari Prasad, pp. 767-68.)

‡ See *The Mughal Empire From Bābar To Aurangzeb* p. 216.

a most finished picture. Soon after its presentation he was presented with a number of its copies, including the original and 'they were so very similar that by candle light one could not be distinguished from the other'. It was with great difficulty that he made out the original from amongst its copies.\* During Jahāngīr's reign the Mughal painter excelled in portrait painting because the Emperor was very fond of it. Portraits of the *Amīrs* and *Malīks* of the Court as well as pictures of court scenes formed the bulk of his commissions. The amalgamation of Persian and Indian artistic traditions that had been going on since the advent of the Great Mughals became complete during the reign of Jahāngīr and in consequence we have those creations of art which have been and will continue to be a great source of inspiration to the painter. If art found its highest expression and attained to perfection, it was because its patron was Jahāngīr, than whom India has known no keener or more discerning, more æsthetic or more sympathetic art critic in the whole of her history. The best painter of his time was *Ustād* Mansūr, the Prince of Painters, upon whom the Emperor had bestowed the proud title of *Nādh-ul-Asr* (Wonder of the Age). He was a past master in animal portraiture and his pictures of birds and beasts are still the living creatures of his immortal brush. Accord-

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\* *Ibid.*

ing to Martin, he 'portrayed his favourites (birds) in a way often worthy of Durer'.\* Another famous painter of the time was Abdul Hasan who too, like Mansūr, was adept in producing human portraits and landscapes. An excellent picture of Jahāngīr's Court, painted by him, was honoured by being used as a frontispiece to the *Jahāngīrnāma*. Bishan Dās was yet another portrait painter who enjoyed great reputation and popularity in his art.†

Under Shāh Jahān, who himself was a good painter and a past master in the art of illuminating books, miniature and portrait painting underwent a great deal of elaboration, so much so that a picture or a portrait, however elaborate and exquisite, was considered to be wholly incomplete if it was not provided with a beautiful border of birds and butterflies, flowers and foliage. The master painters of Shāh Jahān's Court were Muhammad Nādir Samarqandī, Mīr Hashim, Anūp Chitra and Chitrāmanī, and the Chief Director of Artists in his time was Faqīrullāh. His eldest son, Dārā Shikoh, was a great patron of painting. An interesting and excellent album of his has come down to posterity and is treasured in the library of the India Office.‡

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\* *Ibid.*, p. 217.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 217-18.

‡ The Bodleian at Oxford and the libraries of the British Museum and the India Office possess some splendid specimens of Mughal paintings. (*J.R.S.A.*, 1936, p. 236).

Aurangzeb, 'the puritan in the purple', was —, 'Alamgir and others. — simple, austere unostentatious and all averse to indulgence in luxuries. But, though he did not actively patronize painting, he is said to have felt delighted in the pictorial records of his own exploits and to have sought to distinguish between the artists of his own creed and those of others.\* It may be true that Imperial patronage was not bestowed on this art, but the spark lit in the cause of fine arts by the previous Mughal Emperors and others was too strong to extinguish at once. Painting flourished side by side with other arts, for it had its patrons in the peerage and other well-to-do classes. Referring to the Mughal Emperors' patronage of painting, a modern writer says :--

"The art of painting owed much to Mughal"

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\* Pictures of Aurangzeb's battles and sieges have come down to us to testify to the tastes of that Emperor. The view that he 'sowed the seeds of decline that ultimately brought about all but a total decay of the Fine Arts in India' is far from the truth. The writer who lays this charge at the door of Aurangzeb is constrained to admit: "He (*i. e.* Aurangzeb), too, was a true scion of his glorious race in general culture .... The Fine Arts did not die at once the death that Emperor is said to have wished to the body of Indian music. The painter still continued to ply the brush; and Alamgir's edicts did not touch him..... For the Emperor himself delighted in the pictorial records of his own grand doings." (*The Splendour That Was 'Ind*, p. 134). Every emperor had his own canons of art and Aurangzeb had his. Why to grudge him this privilege when we do not grudge it to others?

patronage in India. The Mughal emperors saved it from decay, and through their liberality it attained to a high level of excellence. The empire of the Mughals has become a thing of the past, but the exquisite creations of the master-artists of their time still bear testimony to their refined culture and the magnificence of their tastes. Indeed they occupy a position unique among all Asiatic rulers".\*

Most of the paintings of the Mughal Period have come down to posterity and are treasured in some libraries of India and Europe. Some Indian States and ancient Indian families have also inherited stores of this wealth from their predecessors and preserved them as their heirlooms. Apart from being a source of inspiration to the modern artist, they are valuable aids to history in that they throw considerable light on the life and thought of the people of that period, — their tastes and temperaments, their habits and hobbies, their mode of living, their articles of dress, their house-hold utensils —, in fact, on the entire paraphernalia of their civilization. The importance of so interesting and instructive, so valuable and welcome, so vast and varied wealth has not been fully appreciated, perhaps because it lies scattered almost over the whole world and is not within

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\* *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 769-70.

the reach of an artist of limited means and awaits exploration and elucidation.\*

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Closely connected with the art of painting is the art of illuminating books, which received a great stimulus in India under the influence of Islām. Muslims have always been very fond of illuminating manuscripts of the *Qur-ān* and other religious and classic literature with beautiful gold borders on every page and of having their bindings adorned with gold. This was because painting was prohibited in the early days of Islām and consequently Musalmāns' love of art found its full expression in this art. Hence it is that during the Muslim rule thousands of manuscripts were illuminated and provided with beautiful gold bindings.†

Babar, the first of the Great Mughals, is credited with having introduced into India the art of illustrating books with drawings and pictures and thus making them more lucid and interesting. His Memoirs (*Tuzk-i-Bābarī*) afford an

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\* Sir Thomas Arnold's work on *Bihzād and His Paintings in the Zafarnamah Ms* contains a wealth of this art, including some of the paintings of the Mughal Period. Books of this kind are bound to bring this wealth within the reach of all those interested in the art.

† J. R. S. A. (January, 1936), p 236.

excellent proof of this fact. They are embellished with numerous coloured illustrations of birds, flowers, *etc.* Numerous standard works such as the *Shāhnāma*, the *Changeznāma*, the *Zafarnāma*, the *Razmnāma* (*Mahābhārata*), the *Rāmāyana*, the *Kalilādamna*, the *Nal-daman*, *etc.*, were profusely embellished with lifelike illustrations and given beautiful bindings during the Mughal Period, particularly during the reign of Akbar the Great, who stocked most of them in the Imperial Library and distributed others among his courtiers. The pictorial section of the Imperial Library under Akbar, we are told, contained a number of books and manuscripts with pictures of various kinds.\*

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While we are speaking about books, we may appropriately make a short reference to calligraphy. The art of writing a beautiful hand had been very widely cultivated by Musalmāns ever since their advent in India. The State encouraged this art and employed a large number of amanuenses for copying books, *etc.*; and though it was adopted by many people as a means of

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\* The *Mughal Empire From Bābar To Aurangzeb* pp. 166; *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, by Tara Chand, pp. 269-72; and *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 766-67.



earning a living, there were good many well-to-do persons who practised it for its own sake and loved to copy in a most attractive hand the books they loved to treasure in their own private collections. We know that King Nasīr-ud-Dīn Mahmūd of the so-called Slave Dynasty and Aurangzeb the Great Mughal were accomplished calligraphers, who used to make copies of the *Qur-ān* and live on their sale proceeds; for they did not like to spend the income of the State on their personal requirements. Muḥammad Tughluq was also an expert calligrapher. His "calligraphy put the most accomplished scribes to shame." It is idle to linger long over this art as it has long ceased to be recognized as a fine art; it is equally futile to describe its various forms. Suffice it to say that the *Nastalīq* hand was most popular and the art was in a most flourishing state during the whole of the Muslim Period. The one reason why it was so widely cultivated and encouraged by the State is to be found in the fact that before the invention of the printing press a beautiful hand was an absolute necessity. Calligraphy was in fact a great qualification and a scholar or an author, however accomplished, was wanting in scholarship if he lacked this qualification.\*

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\* *The Mughal Empire From Bābar To Aurangzeb*, p. 176; and *Education in Muslim India*, pp. 12 and 151.

## CHAPTER VIII

### POETRY

Poetry has been a most popular subject among the Muslims from very early days. Their love of beauty found full scope and a most suitable expression in this art. Some practised it as a profession, while others resorted to it as a relaxation from other pursuits. It will be too ambitious to describe the achievements of Arabs in this branch of knowledge or to tell the tale of the Persian poetry of Irān which, in course of time, found a most congenial soil in the Ghaznawid Empire and flourished under the patronage of Sultān Mahmūd and his successors\*. We shall therefore content ourselves with a short reference to the progress of poetry under the Ghaznawids and then revert to India where it was introduced and engrafted by Musalmāns. The fall of the Samanid Dynasty left lights of learning, chiefly poets, unremunerated and they came eagerly to Ghaznīn, the new centre of learning, where they flourished under the fostering patronage of

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\* For the achievements of Arabs in poetry, *vide A Short History of the Saracens* and *The Spirit of Islam*, and for those of the Ghaznawids *vide Literary History of Persia*, Vol. II, Chapter II, and *Medieval India Under Muslim Kings*, Chapter IV.

Mahmūd and achieved their laurels. Four hundred poets, forming the Round Table (*Bazm-i-Adab*) of that patron of poetry, with Unsarī as the Poet Laureate, were in constant attendance at the Ghaznawid Court. They sang the praises of the Sultān whose 'meanest rewards were calculated in thousands of *dinārs*'. The successors of Mahmūd were also remarkable patrons of poetry, but their achievements need not detain us long, for we have to cover a vast field within a very short space.

The early Muslim rulers of India were too much occupied with the work of conquest, yet they found time to turn to gentler arts and more sociable pursuits and pastimes. This was because they had drunk deep at the literary fountain of Ghaznīn and had directly or indirectly imbibed and assimilated much from it. There is no gainsaying the fact that the streams of intellectual energy that began to flow into India with the advent of Islām there, traced their origin to that source — Ghaznīn. Most of the Indian Muslim rulers spent their leisure hours in composing verses and in listening to the poetical compositions of accomplished poets. Poets like Amīr Khusrau flourished at the Court of Iltūtmish, while the Court of Balban was renowned all over Asia for its cultural glory. The latter was also an asylum of a number of distinguished poets who had come there in the train of their princely patrons after their expul-

Progress in  
pre-Mughal  
Period.

sion from their homes by Changez Khān. Another notable feature of this time was the rise of a number of literary societies in various parts of Muslim India. The lead in the formation of these societies was given by Prince Muhammad, who founded the first literary society whose meeting-place was his own palace and whose president was Amīr Khusrau, his tutor and the most prominent Indo-Persian poet of the day. Barnī, who knew the Prince personally, informs us :—

“ The Court of the young Prince was frequented by the most learned, excellent and talented men of the age. His attendants used to read to him the celebrated *Shāhnāma*, the *Diwān-Sanāī*, the *Diwān-i-Khāqānī* and the *Khamsa* of Shaikh Nizāmī. Learned men used to discuss the merits of these poets in his presence. Amīr Khusrau and Amīr Hasan were members of his Court.....He fully appreciated and rewarded the merits of these two poets and delighted to honour them above all his servants.”\*

So profound was the Prince's love of poetry that he is said to have collected the choicest poems of the greatest of Persian poets and compiled them into a book. This anthology, we are informed, contained as many as 20,000

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\* Ferishta, Vol. I. pp. 252 and 258 ; and Elliot, Vol. III, p. 565.

couplets, the cream of Persian poetry, selected from various *Diwāns* or poetical collections. With such a prince and his father as patrons, poetry was bound to flourish by leaps and bounds, and needless to point out that it did. Amīr Khusrau, 'the prince of poets', and Amīr Hasan, 'the Sa'dī of Hindustān,' referred to above, and a number of other eminent poets prospered during the Khiljī regime under the patronage of the Court. Amīr Khusrau, the protégé of a number of successive sovereigns since Iltūtmish, as we have seen, lived long enough to enjoy the patronage of Sultān Ghiyās-ud-Dīn Tughluq, who paid him an honorarium of 1,000 *Tankās* per month from the State Treasury. Ghiyās was a great patron of poetry; but his successor, Muhammad Shāh Tughluq, the ablest and the most learned of all the crowned heads of the Middle Ages, was himself a gifted poet, having at his command a vast store of verses which he used to quote in the course of conversation as well as composition. His munificence attracted a goodly number of poets to his Court from far and wide, and enhanced its poetical prestige. The peaceful and prosperous reign of Firoz Shāh Tughluq and the patronage of the Sultān were highly conducive to the growth of poetry. Azīz-ud-Dīn Khālid Khānī, an accomplished poet, and Qazī Abdul Muqtadir Shānīhī, the best Arabic and Persian poet of India at that time, flourished under his patronage. Sultān Sikandar Lodhī was a poet

who composed elegant verses under the *nom de plume* of *Gulrukh*. According to the author of the *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh*, his *Diwān* (poetical collection) contained 80,000 couplets.\* *Shāh Jalāl* was his tutor in poetry. Needless to say that a man who enjoyed this proud privilege must have been a master of his art. Besides *Shāh Jalāl*, there were many others who lived at the Court and were raised to affluence by the Sultān. It may be noted here that the keeping of good poets at the Royal Court had by this time become a regular institution in India.†

The independent rulers of the outlying provinces were scarcely behind —, Provincial the Sultāns of *Delhī* in their Kingdoms. patronage of poetry and encouragement of poets. They had their own court luminaries who sang their praises and enjoyed their favours. Their courts warmly welcomed the many poets and scholars who had been ousted out of their nests by the storm of *Tīmūr's* invasion or by the disturbances occasioned by the misgovernment of the last of the *Tughluq* and *Lodhī* kings. The courts of *Jaunpur*, *Ahmadābād* (*Gujarāt*), *Mandu* (*Mālwa*), *Lakhnautī* or *Gaur* (*Bengāl*), *Kulbarga* and *Bidār* (*Bahmanid Kingdom* in the *Deccan*) deserve specific mention in this respect. Thousands of poets and other men of learning flocked

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\* *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh* (Ranking), Vol. I, p. 428.

† *Vide Education in Muslim India*, pp. 37 ff.

to those centres of light and learning and settled there permanently ; for in the first place, they enjoyed comparative peace and, secondly, they found generous patrons in the rulers of those kingdoms. Jaunpur became a great university-city and came to be called 'the Shīrāz of India' under the Sharqīs, particularly under its most capable ruler, Sultān Ibrāhīm Sharqī. The rulers of Gujarāt were behind none of the rulers of other provincial kingdoms in their sympathy with and their support of the cause of learning with the possible exception of the Sharqīs of Jaunpur, especially Ibrāhīm. The names of Ahmad Shāh, Muhammad Shāh, Mahmūd Shāh, Muzaffar Shāh II and Mahmūd Shāh II stand out pre-eminent in this sphere. They loved learning and promoted poetry by rewarding merits. Mālwa too was a most flourishing literary centre, where poetry was widely cultivated and encouraged. Under Mahmūd Khilji (1436-69) it could favourably compare with Samarqand and Shīrāz in point of literary excellence. The rulers of Bengāl, particularly those who belonged to the Hussainī Dynasty, were distinguished patrons of letters. Their era has been rightly regarded as the Augustan age of Lakhnautī or Gaur, the capital of Bengāl. Hussain Shāh and his son, Nusrat Shāh, of that line occupy a high place in the literary history of Bengāl. The Bahmanid Kingdom also loomed large in the mental horizon of the Muslim World. Muhammad Shāh Bahmanī was an accomplished poet.

He composed excellent verses in Arabic and Persian, in both of which languages he was highly proficient. Attracted by his bounty, a number of poets came flocking to his Court from all parts of Asia, chiefly from Arabia and Persia. His fame travelled far and wide and, in response to his invitation, Hāfiz of Shīrāz, who is too well-known a poet to need an introduction, set out from his home, but for some reason or the other abandoned the voyage. He, however, wrote an ode and sent it to the Sultān through one Faizullāh. The ode elicited the spontaneous admiration of the Sultān who repaid him by sending presents worth one thousand pieces of gold. Firoz Shāh Bahmanī (1397-1422) was gifted with a remarkable genius for poetry. His *Takhallus* (poetical name) was *Firozī*. He used to send out ships to different countries every year in search of learned men and poets. He bequeathed his love of poetry to his son, Ahmad Shāh, who at one time awarded to one Shaikh Azarī a sum of 700,000 Deccanese *Tankās* as a present and 25,000 *Tankās* more to defray the expenses of his journey home in appreciation of the verses he composed in praise of the palace at Bidār. Ismāil 'Adil Shāh of Bijāpur (1510-1534) was also a good patron of poetry, whose munificence was widely enjoyed. Golconda had its own *Mæcenās*: Qulī Qutb Shāh and his successor, Abdullāh Qutb Shāh, both of whom were accomplished poets. Ibn Nishātī flourished



under the fostering patronage of the former and wrote two important works, *viz.*, *Tulnāma* and *Phūlban*, both of which are still considered as models in the Deccanese dialect.\*

Poetry, like painting and other fine arts, —, During Mughal Period reached the pinnacle of its glory under the patronage of the Great Mughals, almost all of whom were poets of distinction, vitally interested in the promotion of poetry. Babar, to begin with, was a born poet. He used to convene meetings of learned men and indulge in *extempore* versification. His *Memoirs* describe a gathering of his literary associates in a boat where he and his party composed verses for the sake of amusement. Even in the thick of difficulties and dangers he found time to compose an ode on his misfortunes. 'His battles and orgies were humanised by a breath of poetry.' He was the author of several books. He versified a tract composed in honour of Ubaidullāh's parents and wrote an interesting and instructive work on prosody called *Mufasssil*. He put into verse the *Risāla-i-Wālidīya* of His Holiness and the book of Khwāja Ahrār. We also hear of a *Masnavī* (romance) of his composition which, according to Abul Fazl, enjoyed a wide vogue in his time. Last, but not the least, we may mention his *Diwān* of Turkī poems, many

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\* See *Education in Muslim India*, pp. 61 ff.

of which he has quoted in his *Memoirs*.<sup>\*</sup> He is also credited with the invention of a style of verse called *Mubāiyān*. His son, Humāyūn, inherited from him all his habits and hobbies. He had a great passion for poetry and is said to have assigned a high place to the talented poets of his reign ; they were placed among the *Ahl-i-S'adat* or 'the blessed'—the highest grade in the social division of his people. Sher Shāh Sūrī was a profound student of poetry. He had learnt by rote the *Gulistān*, the *Bostān* and the *Sikandarnāma*. The learned men who were the recipients of his favours included a number of poets. His son, Salīm Shah, was a poet of considerable merits, who could spin good verses, and was a generous patron of letters. Akbar the Great was endowed with a romantic and receptive turn of mind. He understood and appreciated the niceties and elegances of poetry and was a good poet. Some of his verses have been preserved by *Allāma* Abul Fazl and other contemporary writers. He was a fastidious critic of poetry and used to improve verses composed by others. During his reign poetry made mighty strides. Poets like Abul Faiz, popularly known as Faizī, the Persian Poet Laureate of India, Khān-i-Khānān Abdur Rāhīm, himself a good poet and a patron of other poets, and Abdul Fateh, who

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<sup>\*</sup> For Bābar's books vide Ferishta, Vol. II, pp. 61-65; *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh* (Ranking), Vol. I, p. 449; *Memoirs of Bābar*, Erskine, p. 431; and Law, p. 122.

was very highly spoken of by 'Urfī, the renowned poet of Shīrāz, flourished under his patronage and greatly enriched the poetical literature of the period.\* Jahāngīr was a good scholar, having a great passion for poetry. We come across a number of instances of his munificence in his autobiography, called the *Tuzk-i-Jahāngīrī*. Among the many poets attached to his Court may be mentioned the names of Babā Tālib Isfahānī, Fasūnī Kashī *Malak-ush-Shū'arā* or Poet Laureate Tālib-i-Amlī, Mīr Ma'sūm Kāshī, Mullah Haidar Khasalī, Mullah Nazīrī Nishāpurī, Shaidā and Mullah Hayātī Gilānī, who were more prominent than others. Himself a cultured king, endowed with refined tastes, Shāh Jahān was a liberal patron of letters. Like his predecessors, he bestowed his favours on poets and other learned scholars of his time. His son, Darā Shikoh, was a most finished scholar and a generous patron of learning. Aurangzeb had a great facility in composing verses. The *Farhat-i-Nāzirīn* mentions the names of forty-five poets who enjoyed his bounty. Of these poets, six had hailed from Lāhore and one of these six was a Brahman named Chandar Bhān and the remaining five were Munīr, Faiza, Araf, Nasir Ali and Mīr Jalāl-ud-Dīn *S'adat Asr*. Sarmad was the best poet of the day, basking

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\* Akbar is generally said to have been illiterate. This is wrong. *Vide my Education in Muslim India*, pp. 164 ff. For a specimen of his hand-writing, see *Bihzād's Paintings in the Zafarnāmah Ms.* by Sir Thomas Arnold.

in the Imperial sun. The later Mughals were also devoted votaries of the Muse. Bahādur Shāh, the last of the line, was a most accomplished poet whose *Takhallus* was *Zafar*. He has left a monumental *Diwān* of four bulky volumes. It is known as *Diwān-i-Zafar*. It enjoys wide popularity. *Zafar's Ghazals* are popularly recited by the learned of the Punjab and Hindustān. His elegy on the fall of his famous house and his own fate is a most pathetic piece of poetical literature. Among the poets who flourished at his Court were Asad-ullāh, famous under his poetical name as *Ghalib*, Shaikh Ibrāhīm *Zauq* and Mīr Khusrau. *Zauq* had the honour of being the teacher of the Imperial patron in poetry.\*

In connection with this account it may be mentioned that almost all the Mughal princesses were learned ladies, having refined tastes. Some of them were poetesses of considerable talents. Aurangzeb's daughter, Zeb-un-Nisā, was, for instance, a good poetess and a great patron of poetry. She has left us a collection of her poems called *Diwān-i Makhlfi*, which is very popular among Indian Muslims.†

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\* See Elliot, Vol. V, pp. 478 ff.; Vol. VI, pp. 315, 360; Vol. VIII, p. 249; *Mīrāt-i-Ahmadi*, Vol. I, p. 410; *Tārīkh-i-Hindustān*, Vol. VIII, pp. 504-5; Vol. X, pp. 311-12; *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh*, (Ranking), Vol. II, pp. 207, 216; Ferishta (Briggs), Vol. I, p. 280; and *Education in Muslim India*, pp. 76 ff.

† *Vide Education in Muslim India*, pp. 192 ff.

The above account, perfunctory in many respects, is nevertheless sufficient to indicate the encouragement which poetry received at the hands of Musalmāns — kings and others. Its wide cultivation may further be inferred from the fact that it figured very prominently in the *curricula* of Muslim schools and colleges, so also from the huge mass of poetical literature that has come down to us from those times. It is not possible just at present to describe the various forms and conventions of the poetry of that period; nor is it possible to discuss the merits and short-comings of the poets who flourished then. That is too much for the present. We may, however, note that the main and most popular themes on which so much was written were religion, divine love, beauty, praise of patrons, love of sweet-hearts and praise of the Prophet and his family. An important feature of *Darbārs* in India was that prominent poets used to come from far and wide and recite *Qasīdas* (panegyrics), praising the ruler who presided over the function and rewarded them according to their merits.

A short reference may appropriately be made to the institution of *Mushā'iras*. *Mushā'ira* or poetical symposium, which was popularized in India by Musalmāns and which became a most valuable asset to the progress of poetry. The object

underlying the contest among the poets was to judge which of the poets excelled in composing a *Ghazal* in a given metre. *Mushā'iras*, in which *filbadih* or extempore verses were composed and recited, were also frequently held. Though it was not customary for the meeting or its president to declare who carried the day, yet the people present there were left in no doubt as to who recited the best poem, the indication of opinion being given by loud applause of the audience or approbation of those in a position to judge. The desire to win the laurels of the day, the ambition to achieve fame and the hope to become court poets and to receive Imperial favours engendered a spirit of healthy competition and pushed poetry almost to perfection.\* We cannot, however, fully appreciate and derive full benefit from the wealth of poetical literature that was produced during that period: that awaits exploration and elaborate treatment.

	Poetry as well as prose, both of which were
	liberally encouraged by Muslim
Cultural	Kings and other well-to-do lovers
importance	of learning, acted, as it were,
of poetry.	a conduit-pipe through which
	ideals of Islām and Islāmic culture were diffused in India among non Muslims. The Hindūs, who are endowed with a special aptitude for

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\* See *Education in Muslim India*, pp. 25 and 233-34; and *J. R. S. A.* (Jan., 1936), p. 233.

adaptation in matters intellectual, took very eagerly to Persian literature, particularly to poetry owing to its peculiar charms, and distinguished themselves in that field quite as much as they have done in English literature in our own times.\* It was largely through the medium of Persian prose and poetry, which in their turn had been immensely influenced by the texts of the sacred literature treasured in the Arabic language, that the educated Hindūs of those times imbibed and assimilated the ethical thought of Islām. Of the remarkable results which this influence produced, one was the rise of what has been called the *Bakhtī* Movement† and the revival of monotheism and the other was the evolution of an indigenous language, Urdū, which in course of time became the *lingua franca* of Northern India and symbolized the union of two different cultures represented by Hindūism and Islām. In other respects also poetry had no mean share in influencing Hindū ideas and ideals, but these details cannot be discussed or dilated upon in a book covering such a wide range of subjects.

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\* The case of Kashmīrī Pandits and Kayasthas affords an excellent illustration of this fact. Sometime ago a big book containing Persian poems composed by Kashmīrī Pandits was published. (See *J. R. S. A*, January, 1936, pp. 230-32). Also see *Bernier's Travels*, pp. 401-402, where the achievements of Kashmīrī Pandits have been dealt with at some length.

† We will refer to this movement while dealing with *Religious Influences* in Chapter XI.

## CHAPTER IX

### MUSIC

In the early days of Islām music suffered in the same way as painting not Introductory, so much on the same ground but probably because it tended to dominate human mind so much as to render it incapable of thinking of anything else. History is a witness that too much indulgence in music, unconsciously resulting in the neglect of other duties, has often cost kings their crowns and lost the masses their freedom.\* It was perhaps on account of its too powerful attraction that music was discouraged in the beginning. Despite this discouragement, however, human nature proved too strong and the art began to be cultivated in the same way and with the same, if not greater, zeal as painting. Religious sanction, when sought, was soon found in the *Hadīth*, recommending *Tilāwat* or reading of the *Qur-ān* with a sweet voice. The contact of Islām with Irān, where music was most popular, and the influence of Sūfīs (Muslim mystics), 'who believed in the efficacy of music as a means of elevating the soul and as an aid to spiritual progress', brought about a great

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\* *Vide infra.*



change in the attitude of Musalmāns towards this art and went a long way in wiping off the stigma attached to it. The position was further simplified when Musalmāns settled down in India and found music occupying a high place in the scheme of Hindū social and religious life. The result was that though divine service in mosques continued to be performed on orthodox lines, without extraneous aids of music, either vocal or instrumental, the art became so popular that musicians began to loom large on almost all festive occasions. The Sūfīs' fondness for music brought into vogue the practice of holding semi-religious congregations, where songs of divine love called *Qawwālīs* were sung by professional singers called *Qawwāls*.\*

With rare exceptions, the Muslim rulers of India were exceedingly fond of music, vocal as well as instrumental. They kept a regular company of singers and instrumental performers at their courts and listened to their melodies in their leisure hours. Music provided a most favourite pleasure and pastime. The activities of Amīr Khusrau, 'the greatest of all ancient and modern poets' according to Barnī, were not confined to literary sphere: He was a humourist, singer and dancer of a very high order. It is said that on the occasion of every convivial

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\* J. R. S. A., (1936), pp. 236-237.

party that his patron gave to his companions, he cheered up the august assembly by reciting a new poem and singing a fresh song. His rapturous melodies surpassed those of his contemporary, Gopāl Nāik, the master musician attached to the Court of Vijayānagar. He is reputed to have invented the *Qawwālī* mode of singing — a judicious mixture of Indo-Persian models —, which later on gained a great popularity among Indian Muslims. Khusrau was at home in instrumental music as well. He introduced the *Sitar*, which was an improvement on the *Vīṇā*. Blessed with a long life and endowed with versatile qualities of head and heart, Khusrau flourished at the Muslim Court during the period beginning from Iltūtmish and coming down to the reign of Ghiyās-ud-Dīn Tughluq. Rukn-ud-Dīn Firoz Shah, son of Iltutmish, was exceedingly fond of music and dancing, so much so that singers and dancing girls grew wealthy by his favours.\* Balban was too serious to keep musicians and dancers at his Court, but music was not deprived of the royal patronage: It found its devoted votary in his son, Prince Kurra Bughra Khān, who founded what we may now call a dramatic society, whose members included a number of musicians, dancers and actors who used to meet at the palace of the Prince. The example thus set by the Royal House was followed by the nobility and middle classes and the result was

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\* *Tārīkh-i-Ferīshṭa* (Urdu). Vol. I, p. 127.

that a number of similar societies sprang up in several parts of the kingdom. Jalāl-ud-Dīn Fīroz Khiljī cherished music more than any other fine art. His companions were noted as much for their learning and wisdom as for their wit and humour. He used to invite them to his private parties and sang and danced with them freely. The best singers of his Court were Amīr Khusrau, Hamīd Rāja and Amīr Khāsa, while the royal orchestra consisted of Fatū Khān, Bih-rūz, Nasīr Khān and Muhammad Shāh Chungī. They cheered up the King and his companions and received rich rewards. 'Alā-ud-Dīn Khiljī was also a great lover of music. He is said to have imported Gopāl Nāik of Vijayānagar, to whom a reference has already been made.\* Fīroz Shāh Tughluq was no less interested in the progress of music. Parties of melodious singers, story-tellers, *etc.*, numbering about 3,000, used to attend the Royal Court on every Friday and give musical and other performances, for which they were handsomely rewarded.†

Though the histories of most of the provincial kingdoms are unchronicled  
 In Provincial Kingdoms partly because they had no court historians and partly because they changed hands with great rapidity and

\* *The Splendour That Was 'Ind*, p. 115.

† *Tārīkh-i-Ferīshṭa* (Urdu), Vol. I, pp. 127, 135-36 and 176; *Education in Muslim India*, pp. 12, 151; and *The Splendour That Was 'Ind*, p. 115.

thus our information about them, particularly about the life and condition of the people living there, is rather meagre, yet we can gather from sidelights and some other sources that music, like other fine arts, was practised and encouraged by their rulers. Sultān Hussain Shāh Sharqī of Jaunpur (1458-79) was highly proficient in this art. He enjoys the reputation of being the inventor of *Khiyāl*, which has since become so popular. Bāz Bahādur of Mālwa, who was defeated by Akbar and whose kingdom was incorporated in the Mughal Empire, was madly enamoured of music, in which he indulged to the utter neglect of his duties as a ruler. This ardent follower of Orpheus paid the penalty for his excessive indulgence in music by losing his crown. His beloved and beautiful wife, Rūpmatī, was an excellent singer. "Seven long happy years," we are told, "did they live together, while she sang to him of love." A great linguist and a cultured king, Zain-ul-'Abidīn of Kashmīr (1420—70) was not only exceedingly fond of music, but was highly accomplished in this art. Of the musicians who enjoyed his favours, the best and most famous was Budī Butt, the author of an excellent treatise on music, which, when perused in the presence of his royal patron, won him a reward worthy of his talents. Firoz Shāh Bahmanī (1397—1422) loved to hear good songs and argued that they helped him to think of God. Mahmūd Shāh Bahmanī (1482—1518) was too much devoted to music to think of

anything else. He passed most of his time in the company of musicians and fiddlers who flocked to his Court and received his favours. He was yet another victim to excessive indulgence in music, whose neglect of State affairs cost him his crown. Yūsuf 'Adil Shāh of Bijāpur (1490—1510) found relief and pleasure in music. He was an expert in the art. According to Mr. N.N. Law, "his skill in it was superior to that of many a master musician of the time whom he encouraged to attend his Court by handsome rewards." The same writer further states that he could successfully play on two or three kinds of musical instruments and "in his delightful mood sang extempore compositions." His son, Ismā'īl 'Adil Shāh (1510—34), was a polished prince, with a strong passion for music. His tastes were Persian and Turkish rather than Deccanese. Chānd Bībī, the most favourite heroine of the Deccan, was a lady of extraordinary talents. Almost all the people of the country believed that no minstrel could play half so beautifully on the lyre or sing half so sweetly as she did.\*

The Mughal Emperors' love and patronage of music has rightly passed into a proverb. Bābar was well-versed in this art and was the author of a very interesting treatise on it. Humāyūn had divided his people into three

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\* *Travels of Ibn Batūta*, pp. 186-87; *Education in*  
(See page 161)

classes, viz., *Ahl-i-S'adat*, consisting of the learned and the pious; *Ahl-i-Daulat*, consisting of the members of the royal blood and other high officials of the State; and *Ahl-i-Murād*, consisting of musicians and singers who depended wholly on the patronage of the Emperor for their maintenance. The last-named class should have been called *Ahl-i-Tarab* or the party of amusement. Music reached its noon-day splendour during the reign of Akbar the Great who, besides being an expert in the art, having a considerable knowledge of its technicalities, was its most powerful patron. "His Majesty," says Abul Fazl, "pays much attention to music and patronizes those who practise this art." Attracted by his encouragement, a large number of musicians hailed to his Court from Persia and other places. They belonged to both the sexes. The finest musical gem of his Court was Miān Tān Sen, the greatest musician that India has known since or before. The bewitching sweetness of his voice is said to have set the Jumna on fire and at his charming tunes, to borrow another metaphor, household utensils used to dance. His tomb has become a place of pilgrimage for the latter-day musicians of India. Harī Dāss, Rām Dāss, Subhān Khān, Dāūd Dhārī, Diwān Dhārī, Mullah Is-hāqī, Miān Nānak Jarjū and Chānd Khān Gwālīorī were other prominent Court singers.

The best instrumental performers were Shihāb Khān, Purbin Khān, Ustād Dost Muhammad of Mashed, Bahram Qulī of Herāt, Bīr Mandal, Ustād Muhammad Hussain, Mīr Abdullah and Qāsim. The one last named is said to have invented an instrument between the *Rabāb* and the *Qubz*. Khān-i Khānān Abdur Rahīm was also a liberal patron of music. One day he granted a sum of Rs. 100,000 to Harī Dāss and Rām Dāss as a present. Jahāngīr 'the Prince of Artists', spent a good deal of his time in hearing the sweet songs sung by such Court musicians as Jahāngīr Dād, Parwez Dād, Khurram Dād, Makhū and Chatar Khān, who flourished under his patronage. Shāh Jahān was a good singer and 'a great patron of music.' He used to spend two or three hours daily 'in listening to songs of women' at night time. The master musicians, whom he loved to hear, were Rām Dāss and Mahāpattar, the philomels of the Mughal Court. The later Mughals were even more devoted to this art than their ancestors: They indulged in it even to the neglect of their duties and paid the usual penalty,\*

This is not the place to enter into the details of the highly elaborate technique of Indian music. We may, however, note in passing that the master musicians of India fully knew

\* *The Mughal Empire From Bābar To Aurangzeb*, pp. 29, 174-76, 219, 278, 373-74; *The Splendour That Was 'Ind'*, pp. 115 ff.; *Tavernier's Travels*, Vol. I, p. 81;

the nature of sound and the art of voice production. They could easily adapt their music to the season of the year, the hour of the day and the mood of the performer. They also knew how to make music respond to the requirements of a particular occasion. There were many *Tālās* and numerous *Rāgs* and *Rāgnīs*.\*

Instrumentation of a most bewildering variety has been a most outstanding feature of Indian music. The principal musical instruments may be divided into four classes : (1) Stringed instruments strung with steel or brass wires or silken cords and tuned with a piece of wood or ivory or finger nails. Among these may be mentioned *Vinā*, *Sarod*, *Sitār*, *Tambūra*, *Rabāb*, etc. (2) Instruments played with a bow, e. g., *Sarangi*, *Dilrubā*, *Mayūrī*, etc. (3) Drum-like instruments struck by hands or with sticks, viz., *Pakhwāz*, *Tabla*, *Naqqāra*, *Dholak*, etc. (4) Wind instruments like pipe, blown by the mouth with full or half breaths. Among these may be mentioned *Bīn*, *Bansrī*, *Surnā*, etc. Many of these musical instruments were either invented or introduced by Musalmāns or were given Persian names by them after some improvements in their form. Instruments such

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and *Early Travels in India*, pp. 103, 310 and 315. Also see N. N. Law's *Promotion of Learning in India*.

\* See *The Splendour That Was 'Ind*, pp. 115 ff.



as *Sarod*, *Dilruba*, *Rabab* and *Tāns* are the instances in point. Where nine performers concerted together, it was known as *Naubat*.\*

Dancing was equally popular and pursued with remarkable zeal. It had developed its own technique. It was a necessary corollary to music, so much so that it was difficult to imagine a music party unaccompanied by dancing. Dancers had their own peculiar dresses, suiting their art. There were regular dancing girls who could be engaged for music parties. The *Devādāsīs* are too well known to call for a special notice.†

Music, in short, was most popular in Muslim India, more than we are led to believe. One reason for its popularity may be found in the fact that a vast majority of Indian Muslims were originally Hindūs or off-springs of Hindūs, who were too fond of it to give it up after embracing Islām, with the result that the art imperceptibly permeated Muslim ranks and became widely popular. It may also be noted here that music, like other fine arts, opened a new channel of intercourse between the

\* *Ibid.*, pp. 118-19; *The Mughal Empire From Bābar To Aurangzeb*, p. 175; *Early Travels in India*, pp. 103, 310 and 315; *J. R. S. A.* (Jan., 1936), pp. 236 and 237; and *Observations on the Mussalmans of India*, pp. 106-7.

† *The Splendour That Was 'Ind*, p. 122.

Hindūs and Muslims of India. The process of co-operation and intermutation began right from the advent of Muslims in India and it was distinctly manifest how the two communities borrowed from each other the precious stores they possessed and thus enriched each other. *Khiyāl*, for example, has become an important limb of Hindū music, while *Dhrupad* has engrafted itself on Muslim music.\*

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A perusal of the preceding chapters must have made it clear that the Kings' example followed by their Courtiers, Muslim Kings of India were great patrons of fine arts. It remains to be noted that the example they set in this sphere was followed by the Muslim nobility and upper classes, whose interest might not have been genuine at all times, but whatever they did, whether as followers of fashion and flattery or as lovers of fine arts, had a beneficial effect on artistic development. That this was highly conducive to the cultural progress of the country cannot be doubted. For, when a king takes a real personal interest in the promotion of arts and literature, he is readily imitated by his courtiers, and this influence further flows down to those who associate with them or come in contact with them.

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\* *The Mughal Empire From Bābar To Aurangzeb*, pp. 175-76; and *Promotion of Learning in India*, by N. N. Law.

"This tendency", says Sir Abdul Qadir "was particularly strong among the nobility of the Mughal Court." Referring to this tendency in his book on "*The History of the Reign of Shāh Jahan*", Mr. A. Aziz writes :—

"The Mughal nobility constituted a sort of agency through which the ideals of art and morals and manners were diffused among the lower classes.....The habits and customs of the people, their ideas, tendencies and ambitions, their tastes and pleasures were often unconsciously fashioned on this model. The peerage acted as the conduit-pipe for this stream of influence. The patronage of art and culture followed the same lines ; and even where the interest was not genuine the enlightened pursuits were followed and encouraged as a dogma dictated by fashion".\*

We may then safely conclude that the fine arts were in a most flourishing state during the Muslim Period, being zealously pursued and promoted not only by the kings but also by their courtiers and the common people and that they were mainly responsible for establishing harmonious relations between the Hindūs and the Muslims and bringing about the cultural unity of India amidst religious differences. J

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\* *Vide J. R. S. A.* (January, 1936), p. 235.

## CHAPTER X

### SOCIAL LIFE

When we attempt to write about the social condition of India under the Muslim Kings, our task becomes very difficult; for, in the first place, our information on this subject is very scanty and secondly, it lies scattered in numerous original writings some of which are not easily accessible to everyone interested in Indian history. In this chapter we will try to bring into focus the relevant rays radiating from the accounts of the contemporary chroniclers in such a way as to paint a vivid picture of society in Muslim India.

To begin with the inner life of an average home: The most important events of Indian domestic life were birth, marriage and death,\* round which were spun numerous customs and ceremonies. The birth of a baby, particularly of a male one, afforded an occasion of great happiness and joyous festivities. If born in a Hindū house, an all-wise Pandit was invited

\* See *Qānūn-i-Islām* by Ja'far Sharif, pp. 17 ff: *J. A. S. B.* (1935), Vol. I, pp. 248 ff.; and *Observations on the Mussalmāns of India*, pp. 210 ff., 56 ff. and 180. ff.

with a view to cast a horoscope (*Janampatrā*) and to perform the popular purificatory rites. If born in a Muslim house, *Azān* (call for prayers) was read into his ears and then after the termination of the period of *Sotak* (ceremonial impurity) the rite of *Aqīqa* (sacrifice) was performed amidst shouts and showers of good wishes or *Mubārakbād*. Normally at the age of five, the Hindū child was placed under the tuition of a *Gurū* or moral tutor, who took care of him until he attained the age of majority. When the Muslim child attained the age of 'four years, four months and four days' the ceremony of *Bismillah Khānī* (also called *Maktab* Ceremony or the ceremony of commencing the education of a child) was performed and he was put to a school or *Maktab*.\* Sometimes earlier than this and sometimes later, the circumcision was performed. Almost about this time, marriage negotiations commenced because both the communities — Hindūs and Muslims — favoured early marriage. The parents took the greatest possible care in choosing their sons-in-law or daughters-in-law. The negotiations culminated in an agreement (often verbal) which was called *Manganī* or *Tilaka* (i.e. betrothal ceremony), which was celebrated with suitable ceremonies befitting the occasion. Among the Hindūs the act of making a formal gift of their daughters to their prospective sons-in-law was called *Kanyādān* (giving away a

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\* *Vide Education in Muslim India*, pp 152-53.

virgin in marriage by way of a gift). When married, the final departure of a Muslim bride from the roof of her parents was known as *Rukhsat*. This is not a complete list of the ceremonies surrounding the marriage of a couple. There were numerous ceremonies performed on the occasion of marriage, but their name is legion and a very long tale in telling. Like birth, death too had its own set of ceremonies which were very scrupulously performed; but unlike it, the occasion of death was characterized by demonstration of grief instead of happiness. Both Hindūs and Muslims believed in life after death with the difference that life after death was eternal in the case of Muslims, but not so in the case of Hindūs who believed in the doctrine of transmigration of souls according to *Karma* or the law of deeds.\* The dead bodies of the Hindūs were, as a rule, cremated† and if a husband died his wife also shared his lot by becoming *Sati*‡ and she was

\* According to Hindū belief, when a person dies the soul of the deceased enters into another body after some time and then dies and again assumes another form according to *Karma*, and the cycle of life and death ceaselessly continues.

† The orthodox theory enjoins the casting of corpse of a Brāhman into a river, the cremation of that of a Kshatriya and the burial of that of a Shudra; but the practice of burning the dead was almost universally observed by the Hindūs of high castes during the period under consideration.

‡ Forcible *Sati* was strictly forbidden by the Muslim Kings, but was permitted when done voluntarily.

burnt alive on her husband's funeral pyre, whether according to or against her will, though a husband was never subjected to such a sacrifice in case his wife passed away. The Muslims were buried without exception. Among the posthumous ceremonies performed at the time of death, they attached immense importance to *Sayyūm* (the third day) and *Chihillum* (the fortieth day), when the *Qur-ān* was recited and sweet drinks (*sharbat*) and betel leaves and and even food were supplied to the poor according to the means of the berieved family for the spiritual benefit of the departed soul.\*

When the Musalmāns first appeared in India, and indeed for a long time afterwards, they fully exploited the native architectural talent in planning their palaces and towns. To the outstanding features of a Hindū town, *viz.*, massive and durable palaces and places of pilgrimages, temples and tanks, broad and open spaces, they added the distinguishing features of a Muslim

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This was indeed one of the noblest contributions of Muslim Rule to the cause of Indian womanhood — a contribution that has not so far been duly appreciated. For some details of this practice, see *Travels of Ibn Batūta*, pp. 191 ff.; *Early Travels in India*, p. 119; *Bernier's Travels*, pp. 306-14; and *Tavernier's Travels*, Vol. II, pp. 162, ff.

\* *J. A. S. B.*, (1935), Vol. I, pp. 248 ff.; *Observations on the Mussalmāns of India*, pp. 56 ff.; and *Qānūn-i-Islām*, pp. 89, ff.

colony, viz., magnificent *Masjids* and *Mad-rasas*, with fountains, arches and domes; gateways and mausoliums, with beautiful gardens; an improved style of city-walls or ramparts, with series of watch-towers and other military equipment. The most important, and of course, the most beautiful building in the capital city was, from the very nature of the case, the Royal Quarter, containing the palace of the King and the houses of his establishment, the Imperial *Harem* and a *Masjid*. Among the numerous apartments of the Royal Palace may be mentioned the *Jāmkhāna* or drawing room, dressing rooms, bath-rooms, retiring rooms, which opened into courtyards and female quarters called *Zenāna*. The walls of the palace were adorned with silk hangings and velvet tapestries, fringed with beautiful brocades and studded with precious stones. In short, nothing was spared to make the Imperial abode a thing of beauty and romance. The houses or *havelis* of high officials or nobles of rank were modelled on the plan of the Royal Palace. They were spacious buildings, containing a number of apartments, drawing rooms, bath-rooms, a water-tank, an open courtyard, an orchard and a modest library. Some rooms were set apart for the use of the *Harem*. They were decorated with valuable hangings and adorned with other articles of luxury. The furniture of the Royal Palace and of the houses of the nobility comprised, *inter alia*, beds and chairs, bedsteads and cushions. The articles of bed-



ding were collectively called *Chhapparkhat*. *Sitalpattis* or mattresses and mosquito-curtains were also used in some parts of the country. There were also houses that had a tank on one side of it, an orchard of fruit trees on the other, bamboo groves on the third and an open space on the fourth. The houses of the poor represented the minimum of the immediate necessities of life. Four low walls, made of clay, enclosed a small space and had over them a thatched roof, supported by some wooden legs, resting on wooden stands or rough pillars. A small opening was left out in front to serve as an entrance. It was sometimes fitted with doors and sometimes not. The floor was plastered with mud, mixed with cowdung. The houses of high class peasants, such as those of headmen and village elders, were somewhat bigger and better equipped. Often they were very commodious and had a *Chabūtra* (raised platform) outside, an open courtyard, a verandah and even a second story.\*

Dresses and clothes differed with different classes in the same way as houses and displayed almost the same diversity of design and decorative art. The only uniformity, if there was any, was among the peasants and the poorest classes and it chiefly

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\* J. A. S. B. (1935), Vol. I, pp. 265 ff; and *Observations on the Mussalmāns of India*, pp. 163 ff.

consisted in reducing the requirements of clothing to the minimum. The early Sultāns of Delhi used *Kullahs* or tall Tartar caps as their head-dress. King Jalāl-ud-Dīn used to wear a turban. *Qabās* or tight-fitting tunics were worn for coating. They were made of fine muslin if worn in summer and of pure wool if worn in winter. *Peshwāz* and *Anga*, which became so stylish and popular later on, were modelled on them. *Dagla*, which looked like a loose gown, stuffed with corded cotton or some other warm and soft material, was used as an overcoat in winter. The monarch and the highest officials of the State used *Fārghuls* or fur-coats as well. These coats were often presented to the nobles as *Khil'ats* or robes of honour. The *Nadrī* wear, invented by Jahāngīr, was a robe of honour reserved for the favoured few of his friends and courtiers.\* Ordinary shirts, *Shalwārs* (loose drawers) and light but beautiful shoes were commonly used. Sleeping suits were worn at night and changed almost every day. In their private life, the nobles wore the same dress as their king; on public occasions, they used to wear the *Khil'at* dress, which consisted of a *Kullah*, a tunic worked with brocade and velvet, and a white belt. The nobles of high rank rode a Tartar stallion, equipped with precious trappings, and had some retainers in front and behind him. Turban

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\* *The Mughal Empire From Babar To Aurangzeb*, p. 392; and *The Splendour That Was 'Ind*, p. 211.

(*Pag*) was also used in private. Underwears and sleeping suits were also in use among them. The dresses of the nobles of lower rank should be judged accordingly. The soldiers had no special uniform. The arms they carried distinguished them from the rest of the people. The orthodox Muslims wore simple dresses in accordance with the spirit of the *Shariyat*. The *Ulamā* wore a turban (*Amāma*) and a gown (*Qabā*). The ascetics wore a tall *Darvish* cap, the *Qalansūwah*, on their head, wooden sandals on their feet, and wrapped themselves in a sheet of unsewn cloth. The *Sūfīs* dressed themselves in loose woolen gowns. Moorish turbans, loose drawers, long leather shoes and finger-rings were in vogue in places such as Gujarāt, where Moorish influence ruled supreme. The Hindūs used turbans as their head-dress and wore a mark called *Tilak* on their forehead. If a Hindū did not wear such a mark on his forehead or a ring in one of his ears, there was nothing to distinguish him from a Muslim noble. *Dhotīs* trimmed with gold lace, sandals studded with pegs of precious metal and a forked stick called *Baisākhī* were used by the Brahmans. The *Sādhus* or *Yogīs* (ascetics) of both the sexes among the Hindūs used a simple *Langota* (loin-cloth) and a dried gourd and went about besmeared with ashes, carrying an achre, a deer horn, a *Chakra*, a necklace of jujubes, an umbrella, a trident, a rosary, and a begging bowl. The Hindū masses moved about almost naked, wearing only

a *Langotī* or a *Dhotī*,\* which was sufficient for purposes of clothing. It was only under the influence of Islām and as a natural result of coming into contact with Musalmāns that the Hindūs began to wear the dress which they now wear. Musalmāns' contribution to Indian dress is in no way inferior to their contributions to Indian culture in general.

As regards the dress of Muslim ladies of Ladies' Dresses. upper classes, we may say that it consisted of loose drawers, a shirt and a scarf together with the familiar veils or shrouds, *i.e.* *Burqās*. Among Hindū ladies, a *Chādar* or a sheet of cloth, resembling *Sari*, a *Cholā* or bodice, an *Angyā* or brassiere of dark colour, a *Lehnga* or a long and loose short, and a *Rupatia* or long scarf, were worn in various parts of the country. Leather shoes were also used and according to a writer 'the probability is that more women wore shoes than men'. Dresses in India have undergone numerous changes, yet the older male and female dresses have survived to our own times, both among the Hindūs and the Muslims.†

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\* *Langotī* means loin cloth and *Dhotī* is a long sheet of cloth covering the lower part of the body below the waist.

† J. A. S. B. (1935), Vol. I, pp. 275 ff.; and *The Splendour That Was 'Ind'*, pp. 107 ff.; and *The Mughal Empire From Bābar To Aurangzeb*, pp. 391-92; and *Qānūn-i-Islām*, pp. 300 ff.

Beauty has always had its admirers. The spirit of self-appreciation and self-realization is embedded in the very nature of human beings. Few can claim to be devoid of this spirit and the period under review is no exception to this rule, for we have ample evidence at our disposal to show that physical attractiveness was cultivated by both the sexes, irrespective of their caste or colour, rank or race. The leisured classes had an additional advantage in that they could utilize their leisure hours in beautifying their persons and adding to their physical charms. 'It was a popular craze to look young even though youth had receded beyond recall.' Rich and respectable persons successfully employed all sorts of devices, such as the use of *Khizāb*,\* *etc.*, for looking young even at the age of sixty. The dressing of hair, the combing of beards, the use of scents and oils and excellent dresses enhanced their beauty. The requirements of bath, particularly among the Hindūs, were very elaborate and various kinds of oils were rubbed on the body before bathing. The fair sex required no excuse to look lovely. Most of their time was, therefore, spent in beautifying their persons. Antimony for eyes, vermilion for effecting the parting of hair, musk for breasts, *Hennā* for hands and feet and finger-tips, a certain black powder for eye-brows, dentifrice for

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\* *Khizāb* is a coloured substance used for blackening hairs.

teeth, and betel leaves for reddening lips and sweetening breath were some of the prominent articles of enhancing beauty.\*

Ornaments of gold and silver and sometimes of copper and brass were Jewellery. used for the decoration of the body. Wearing of ear-rings was regarded as a mark of respectability and they were worn by men and women alike. In the case of the rich, they were studded with precious stones. The outstanding features of a Rājput warrior were his ear-rings, and turned upside whiskers. Women wore, as they do now in most cases, ornaments on almost every limb of their body from top to toe. Weight and variety, rather than elegance and delicacy, determined the choice of women in matters of decorative ornaments. *Suhag* or married life of a lady signified the covering of almost all the body with jewellery.†

The most favourite food of the Muslim Food and Drink. masses was meat; but the Hindūs as a whole were vegetarians. The former were very fond of eating baked bread and fried meat called *Kabābs* and meat or fowl cooked with rice and spices called *Pulāo*. The ordinary Muslim meal consisted of fried bread of wheat and

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\* *Vide* J. A. S. B. (1935), Vol. I, pp. 279 ff.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 281-82; and *Qānūn-i-Islām*, pp. 313 ff.

chicken. The Hindūs used to take rice boiled with pulses, called *Kichhri*, and *Sambosas*. *Achārs* (pickles) and relishes were used by all and sundry. Both Hindūs and Muslims used to take their food on the ground, the former individually and the latter collectively, and the abundance at the *Dastarkhwān*\* indicated the height of hospitality and the waste did not matter much because there were a number of dependants, such as domestics and beggars, who used to feed themselves on the remnants. An important feature of Mediæval social life was the abundance of public bakeries, where almost every kind of cooked food and raw victuals could be had at reasonable prices. This feature is now out of fashion except in certain parts where the Muslims constitute the bulk of the population. Their existence was opposed to the cooking and eating ideas of the Hindūs who attached peculiar sanctity to their *Chauka*† and never ate from the hands of those of lower castes. Their kitchen floor was plastered with cowdung and none but they and their equals could have free access to it, and that after duly purifying their persons.‡ Their intricate arrangements of cooking and eating have survived to our own times, though they have lost much of their force

\* *Dastarkhwān* means a sheet of cloth which is spread on the floor and on which food is arranged,

† *Chauka* (literally a square piece of ground) is the place where the Hindūs cook and eat their food.

‡ *Vide J. A. S. B. Vol. I, (1935), p. 284.*

under the influence of Islām which denounces caste restrictions and preaches equality. The Muslims were not fettered with such formalities and had no objection to eating from the hands of other persons.

The two important aspects of the social life of Muslim India were *Razm* and *Bazm* or warfare and social Amusements and Recreations. intercourse respectively. Normally, every man was expected to be an active soldier, capable of doing military duty in the times of war. During the Muslim period there was fighting and fighting in plenty, but there were periods of peace as well. In peaceful times people indulged in pleasures and pastimes and recreative sports. Among military sports, which were greatly encouraged in order to keep the martial spirit alive, we may count polo called *Chaugān*, fencing, wrestling, horse-racing, chariot-racing, arrow-shooting and sword-play. Throwing of discuses and javelins was also very popular. Swimming was in vogue. A kind of hockey\* was also played in Kashmīr and ball-throwing was popular in Bengāl. The game of hockey was played with

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\* A portrait of the reign of Emperor Jahāngīr has come down to posterity and is said to be in possession of Sir E. Denison Ross. It describes a match of hockey in progress, being played with polo-sticks, while the Emperor is enjoying it. The game of polo has indeed a direct influence on the development of hockey which resembles it very closely. (*Vide J. A. S. B.* (1935), Vol. I, p. 287).



polo-sticks. *Shikār* or chase afforded another pleasure and pastime and the Musalmāns, who loved outdoor excursions, were extremely fond of it. Almost all the Sultāns and Badshāhs of Delhi had a great craze for it. They maintained large establishments for *Shikār*. The *Shikār* Department was under a separate officer called *Amīr-i-Shikār* or Master of the Hunt, who was often an officer of high rank. Under him were *Arizān-i-Shikār*, *Khasādārān* and *Mehltārān*. A piece of land, measuring twelve *Krohs* (=about 24 miles), was acquired near Delhi to serve as a State preserve where all kinds of beasts were collected. The *Shikār* regulations were strictly enforced and defaulters were severely penalized. These were out-door games and sports. Among indoor games that were played both with and without stakes may be mentioned chess, *Chaupar* (also called *Chausar* and *Pachchisi*) and *Nard* (Persian backgammon). *Ganjafa* (playing cards) was introduced later.\* These and various other games were played at pleasure parties called *Jashns*, which were also accompanied by danty dishes, drinks, *Kabābs* and music. These, however, fell to the lot of the rich ; the popular amusements, which provided pleasure to the poor, were religious festivals, periodical pilgrimages to sacred places, jugglers' tricks, folk-dances and songs. The Muslim festivals of

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\* For these and some other popular games, see *Qānūn-i-Islām*, by Ja'far Sharīf, pp. 331 ff.

*Idain* (*Id-ul-Fitr* and *Id-uz-Zuha*) and *Shab-i-Barāt* were celebrated with great enthusiasm. The popular Persian festival of *Nauroz* or spring festival was becoming more and more popular. Special prayers were offered on both the *Ids*. The Hindū festival of *Basant Panchmī*, corresponding to *Nauroz*, was a spring festival and was celebrated with great eclat. Among other Hindū festivals mention may be made of *Dīwālī* or the festival of *Dīwās* (earthen lamps), *Shcorātri*, *Desehra* and *Pūranmāshī*. The coronation of a new king, the marriage of a member of the Imperial family, the birth of a prince or princess afforded occasions of unusual happiness, when prisoners were set free, the poor were fed and huge sums of money were spent for catering to the pleasures of the people at large. All such occasions were accompanied by music, both vocal and instrumental. The popular art of drama had gone down the high pedestal of glory it had once reached and had degenerated into the mimicries of mountebanks and the vulgar tricks of buffoons and professional jugglers. Its decay was arrested in time by the fresh stimulous it received from the *Krishnā* cult. *Rām līlās* and *Krishnā līlās*, enacting the most familiar and popular events of the lives of *Srī Krishnā* and *Rāmā* were attended by large crowds of all classes. There were many acrobats, mountebanks and jugglers, who performed their tricks both with and without the aid of instruments. The tight-rope walker and the puppet-show man were familiar

figures at fairs and festivals. Of the most popular performances of the acrobats of the time were *Morchāl* or rope-trick and mango-trick. Almost every ruler employed some acrobats to amuse himself and his associates at times. Snake-charmer was quite as busy in his trade as he is to-day. Cock-fighting and pigeon-flying were also popular with the people of all classes.\*

Morals & Manners. It may be easy to analyse the morals and manners of a people of any particular age, but the accuracy of the results obtained cannot be guaranteed. Generalizations in this respect are therefore apt to be most misleading, because due allowance cannot be made for social as well as individual differences — differences which are highly conspicuous in Indian society. With all this, however, it will be admitted that in comparison with the complexities of the modern age, the morals and manners of the people of the times with which we are concerned here 'were simpler and more uniform, more compact and more homogeneous'. Both the virtues and vices of that age were few, but both were strong and deep-rooted. They were fostered first by religion, then by usage and lastly by traditions. Once it was understood by the people that their forefathers had behaved in a particular manner under certain circum-

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\* J. A. S. B. (1935) Vol. I, pp. 294 ff.; *Qānūn-i-Islām*, pp. 151, ff.; and *Observations on the Mussalmāns of India*, pp. 6 ff. and 144 ff.

stances and in such and such situations, the direction for them was clear and the force of this sanction was sufficient. The various virtues of Mediæval Indian society have been summed up by a writer in two comprehensive words, *viz.*, Loyalty and Charity. Loyalty, in the broadest sense of the word, includes such virtues as *Bhakti Mārga* or *Namak-Halālī*, meaning to be true to one's salt, *i.e.*, loyalty to one's superior or master; *Yāri* or *Dostī* — meaning friendship, companionship or comradeship; and chivalry or loyalty to a particular line of conduct or behaviour. Likewise, Charity, in a wide sense, embraces all such traits of character as generosity and hospitality. It was called *Dān* and *Pun* by the Hindūs and *Khairāt* and *Zakāt* by the Muslims. Cases of individual loyalty and charity were numerous and the history of our period is rich in them; and though cases of treachery and deceit were not few, great importance was attached to the cultivation of such virtues. The vices of the age, like its virtues, were few and are summed up in two words, *viz.*, Wine and Woman. Drinking, though forbidden by the *Qur-ān*, was supported by Persian tradition and was resorted to by some Muslims on the excuse that 'it was the best restorative for health' and under other similar pretexts. Some of the *Ulamā* were not free from this vice, so that Amīr Khusrau denounces them for 'pouring liquor in the same bosom in which the *Qur-ān* is treasured'. Most of the Muslim Kings of India forbade drinking, but

failed to suppress it successfully. Opium and *Bhang* were also used. The latter was a favourite drug of Hindū religious orders. Excessive indulgence in physical pleasures was the besetting sin of the times. Prostitution is an ancient institution and we are also familiar with the *Devadāsīs* in the Deccan. Girls were regularly offered to temples by the Hindūs and public prostitutes were numerous. Prostitution seems to have grown into a regular nuisance in the time of 'Alā-ud-Dīn, for during his reign their number had increased so enormously that it occasioned official anxiety and engaged the serious attention of the authorities. Accordingly, many of them were given away in marriage and thus the profession was relieved of the congestion. The love of male sweetheart, which figures so prominently in contemporary Persian poetry and prose, does betray an unhealthy sex-complex, though it might have been nothing more than merely 'pure love'. In the presence of *Pardah*, the segregation of a large number of the people in military camps, remotely removed from the operation of normal family influences, the handsome appearance and fair colour of a youth would become the cynosure of many eyes and an object of undue admiration, if not of carnal love. Gambling was also common. In Hindū society it had a semi-religious sanction and was almost universally resorted to on certain festivals, such as *Diwālī*, when, it is stated, those who do not gamble assume the form of

a donkey after their death. Muslim gambler was, according to Amīr Khusrau, a familiar figure in Mediæval Indian society.\*

Elsewhere we have said something about  
 Etiquette. the behaviour and manners of  
 the nobles and upper classes.  
 The nobles were guided by their monarch in  
 their manners and mode of living and the  
 masses by the nobility. The nobility acted as  
 an agency through which the ideals of art and  
 morals and manners were diffused among the  
 masses. Their habits and hobbies, their  
 pleasures and pastimes their tendencies and  
 traditions, their ambitions and ideas, their  
 morals and manners we moulded on this model.  
 The adage "Gravity and appearance maketh a  
 man" was the *motto* of most of the people and  
 the significance underlying it is correctly con-  
 veyed by Amīr Khusrau through his statement:  
 "The silent heights of a mountain peak safe-  
 guard its dignity and grandeur". But this did  
 not operate as a bar so as to prevent the people  
 from being sociable, courteous and amiable.  
 The courtesy shown to the fair sex and the  
 hospitality meted out to the strangers rightly  
 passed into household proverbs. Whenever a  
 visitor called upon a nobleman, the latter left  
 his place and advanced a few paces in order to  
 receive him. After an exchange of greetings  
 and shaking of hands, or after a warm and

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\* J. A. S. B. (1935), Vol. I, pp. 308 ff.

heartily embrace if they happened to be friends, the host conducted his guest to his drawing-room and seated him in a most comfortable seat at an elevated place to do him a special honour, and entertained him as best as he could. If the visitor came with a present, he returned with a gift of greater value. This custom was known as *Dastūrī-i-raftan* or 'parting gift' and is still popular among the Muslims. In the course of conversation the choicest words and phrases were used and the speaker avoided making references to his or her own achievements and felt shy and blushed when they were referred to or dilated upon by others in his or her presence. Vulgar jokes and indecent remarks were shunned and loud laughter was avoided. Oaths were commonly taken and administered, that of *Haqqā* (by God) being most the frequent. Gauntlets were thrown down and picked up and duels were frequently fought. Hindū manners were quite sweet, less formal and less demonstrative. A Hindū mother was an object of great veneration, though the fate of an unfortunate widow was tragic.\* *Ahimsā* (non-violence) was *Parmū Dharmā* (the essence of religion). So much importance was attached to personal hygiene by the Hindūs that it engendered hatred of human-beings among them. The rigidity of the caste system was great and Hindū society was divided into water-tight compartments.†

\* See *Travernier's Travels*, Vol. II, pp. 162, ff

† *J. A. S. B.* (1935) Vol. I, pp. 322, ff. and *Observations on the Mussalmāns of India*, pp. 62 and 141, ff.

## CHAPTER XI.

### RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES

It does not fall within the scope of this small chapter to define Islām and to describe its principles and practices — for that the reader should read the *Qur-ān* and the commentaries thereon.\* Attention in this chapter is concentrated only on some of its finest features and an attempt is made to trace the influence they exerted on Indian religious thought and practice.

We have already shown in a previous chapter that toleration in the true sense of the term was the sheet-anchor of Muslim Rule in India and the Muslim Kings never interfered with the religion of their non-Muslim subjects. Whether they did so as a matter of choice and free-will or of dire political necessity may be disputed, but the fact remains that they had

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\* Thanks to the labours of 'Allāma A. Yūsaf Ali, an excellent translation of the Holy *Qur-ān* is now available for the English speaking people. A perusal of this and such books as *The Spirit of Islam* by the late Syed Ameer Ali will not only show the beauties of Islām, but dispel all those doubts which mischivous propaganda has brought into existence.



drunk deep at the fountain of Islām which means peace, which preaches peace and which is the principal and most practical exponent of peace. *Lā ikrāha fid-dīn*, i.e. "There is no compulsion in religion", is a Quranic injunction which the followers of Islām have always obeyed and have therefore behaved most benevolently towards their subjects, irrespective of their race or religion. There is no gainsaying the fact that the lot of the subjugated people has never been better than under the ruling races of Islām, whether in India, Spain or elsewhere. Forcible conversions are neither encouraged nor countenanced but emphatically forbidden by Islām. In India the *Zimmīs* (non-Muslims) were allowed full freedom of worship and liberty of conscience. Nothing can afford a better or more tangible proof of this historical fact than the presence of so many temples throughout the country, chiefly in Delhi, Agra and Lāhore, the capital cities of the Muslim Empire, where most of the temples extant in those times have survived to the present day. "The iconoclastic pretensions were meant only for the applause of the gallery". Ambitious and enterprising leaders sometimes exploited the religious zeal of their followers for gaining their ends, but Islām as a religion is to be judged by its principles and not by the acts of those — and they are few and far between —, who pretend to profess it and mendaciously misrepresent it in furtherance of their mundane motives. The mischivous theory

that Islām was propagated in India and elsewhere at the point of the sword has by this time been fully exploded and it is now admitted by all impartial observers, who have made an independent study of Islām and its teachings, that there is such a magnetic force in this 'open air religion' that everyone is bound to feel drawn towards it in spite of himself. A number of non-Muslims have paid glowing tributes to it and admired its suitability for all climes and conditions. Mr. G. B. Shaw has gone even so far as to declare that in a century or so the whole of Europe in general and England in particular are bound to embrace Islām. The laws of Islām are in fact the laws of nature and are bound to prevail everywhere in the world.

The Muslim rulers of India did not deliberately concern themselves with the work of conversion partly because they were too much occupied with the work of conquest and consolidation and partly because it was impolitic and inexpedient to do so. It was left to Muslim saints and savants such as Abū Hifs Rabi *bin* Sāhib-al-Asadī-al-Basari, Mansūr-al-Hallāj, *Hazrat* Alīyār Shāh Sāhib, Shaikh Ismā'il Bokhārī, Farīd-ud-Dīn Attār, Bābā Rihān, Nūr-ud-Dīn (or Nūr Satāgar) Sayyad 'Alī Hujverī, Khwāja Muīn-ud-Dīn Chishtī, Shaikh Jalāl-ud-Dīn Tabrezī, Sayyad Jalāl-ud-Dīn Bokhārī, Bābā Farīd, Abdul Karīm-al-Jili, Banda Nawāz Sayyad Muhammad

Gesū Darāz, Pīr Sadr-ud-Dīn, Sayyad Yūsuf-ud-Dīn and Imām Shāh — to name but a few of those who came to India in the train of Muslim warlords and undertook the work of religious propaganda in a most peaceful manner. Armed with a complete, clear and comprehensive religion, having a simple and intelligible formula of faith, definite dogmas and democratic theories of social organization, the Muslim missionary was sure to score splendid successes in a land like India, where religious conflicts had disturbed the peace of the people and the worship of numerous gods had agitated their minds. There the minds of the people had been thrown open to accept new ideas — ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity, so much so that when Islām appeared in India they were ready to receive the gospel of truth it carried with it. Once the beauties of Islām were brought home to the Hindūs, who had hitherto been subjected to innumerable indignities and insults and to whom their religion had assigned a most degrading position in life, they flocked towards it in ever-increasing numbers. The simple doctrine of monotheism and the democratic brotherhood, in which all are equal and in which a slave of to-day can become a sovereign of to-morrow, coupled with some of such advantages as Imperial favours, which meant so much in that despotic age, must have attracted a number of non-Muslims to the religion of the ruling race, which offered a most perfect democracy to all those who embraced it.

Moreover, the conversion of such men of might as the last of the Cherāman Perumāl Kings of Mālābār who reigned at Kodungallur,\* and the encouragement extended to Muslim missionaries by such kings as the Zamorin,† who 'definitely encouraged conversion', and Kun Pāndya, who made grants of lands for the erection of mosques,‡ must have made a deep impression on the minds of the people under their sway and accelerated conversions into mass movements. The theory that many of the

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\* Early in the ninth century the last of the Cherāman Perumāl Kings of Mālābār, who reigned at Kodungallur, embraced Islām and proceeded to Mecca on a pilgrimage. He landed at Shahr and died there after four years. From Shahr he sent three savants, viz. Malik Ibn Dīnār, Sharif-ud-Dīn Ibn Mālik and Mālik Ibn Habbīb, with their families, to Mālābār with a letter of instructions about the government of his kingdom and the reception of the Musulmāns. As a result, the Musulmāns were warmly welcomed and allowed to erect mosques and monasteries in Mālābār. The memory of the conversion of the King is kept alive in his country where the coronation of its kings is still surrounded by a number of Islāmic practices.—(See *Influence of Islām on Indian Culture*, by Tara Chand, p. 34).

† The Zamorin is supposed to occupy the throne only as a representative of Cheramān Perumāl whose return from Mecca is still awaited. The Mahārājas of Travancore have still to declare at their coronation at the time of receiving the sword as an emblem of royalty "I will keep this sword until the uncle who has gone to Mecca returns". (See *Influence of Islām on Indian Culture*, pp. 34-36).

‡ *Influence of Islām on Indian Culture*, p. 112).

Hindūs had become Musalmāns for economic advantages and that their conversion was not the conversion of heart carries its own refutation.

Slavery was a recognized institution in Mediaeval India among the Hindūs and the Musalmāns, as it was all over the world. The Prophet of Islām was the first to denounce it. The abolition of slavery was doubtless his object, but he could not extirpate it all at once as it had taken deep roots in Arabia. He tried to do away with it by steps. The status assigned to slaves and the conditions governing the existence of the institution of slavery in Islām are such as to amount to its practical negation. Slavery, as it was understood and is still understood outside the world of Islām, cannot be reconciled to the spirit of the teachings preached and propagated by the Prophet. Since in theory a slave was generally a convert to Islām, he possessed the same rights and privileges as any other member of Muslim society. The fact of his embracing Islām had an additional force in it. The event of his conversion was celebrated with great pomp and show when, amidst shouts of *Allāho Akbar* and showers of good wishes, he was proclaimed a Muslim from the pulpit of a mosque. If he happened to be a Hindū of a low caste, the social change was decidedly for the better. If he belonged to a high caste, he could not go back to Hindū society except under very

humiliating conditions,\* because of his being a captive of war and hence a slave. According to the universally accepted and long established usage of the age, he was at the mercy of his master, who had absolute power over his life and liberty. It was an act of favour and special benevolence on his part if he chose to set him free in accordance with the spirit of his religion or employed him in the service of the State. On the whole, the social status of a Hindū slave in Muslim society was in no way inferior to that of the masses in general. If he hailed from a low stratum of Hindū society, he rose several steps higher in the ladder of liberty and social esteem, and history is a witness that a talented slave often forced his way into the royal household, where all doors of honour and distinctions were flung open to him and whence he climbed such heights of eminence as were not ordinarily accessible to the highest and the noblest in the kingdom. The conditions of the country and the general insecurity of life, coupled with the fact that Islām put no obstacles in his way, often enabled a slave to make his way in the world. Manumission was encouraged by the State and slaves were set free after some time. Slaves were generally

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\* As a member of a high caste, he ought to have fought to the finish and when defeated and driven to despair, he ought to have resorted to *Jauhar*, a rite according to which the Hindūs (particularly the Rājputs) killed or cremated their womenfolk alive and themselves appeared on the field and fell fighting against their foe.

employed by Hindūs and Muslims alike. They were both male and female. The latter were of two kinds : those who were employed for domestic work and those who were kept for company and pleasure. The former included those who were bought in childhood, and kept for the service of the female inmates of the *Harams*. Trade in eunuchs was brisk in Bengal during the thirteenth century. Slaves were imported from many countries, but those of India and Turkistān were noted for their industry and skill. Many Muslim kings, such as Muhammad of Ghor and Firoz Shāh Tughluq were deeply interested in the education of slaves. They adopted them as their sons and entrusted them with the most responsible tasks. While Muhammad of Ghor bequeathed his dominions to his adopted sons who were originally slaves, Firoz Shāh Tughluq maintained a regular department of slaves and took the greatest care in promoting their moral and material welfare. At one time the department is said to have turned as many as 1,200 slaves into serious scholars and artisans. The work of the department was carried on by an *Ariz*, a treasurer and a *Majmū'dār*. The duties of the last-named official were to look after the *Mahāscbat* (accounts) of the *Kārkhanās* (workshops). This department was under the control of the *Vazīr*. Muhammad of Ghor, whose love of his slaves is so well known, must have appointed special officials for looking after them, though we do not come across any reference,

but the annals of the early Ghaznawids teem with references to such officials as *Hājib Salār-i-Ghulāmān* and *Mushraf-i-Ghulāmānsarāi*. The number of slaves was ever on the increase during the early Muslim period: They were 6,000 in the times of Mas'ūd, 'Alā-ud-Dīn had 50,000 and Fīroz Tughluq had 180,000. The Sultāns were very fond of keeping slaves because the latter were a kind of set-off against the clannish and tribal brotherhoods and organizations. They were relied upon in the times of necessity and in serious situations, because they depended for their existence on none other than their royal patrons. The Great Mughals were even more greatly interested in the welfare of slaves. Akbar the Great is credited with introducing a reform whereby the prisoners of war could not be enslaved.\*

The place that woman occupies and the privileges she enjoys in Muslim society in accordance with the commands of the *Qur-ān* are in no way inferior to those of man. Man and woman are equally indispensable for each other: They are like the wheels of one carriage. They are absolute masters in their own spheres and the division of duties among them in

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\* See Elliot Vol. III, pp. 340-41; *Ferishta*, Vol. I, p. 200; *Promotion of Learning in India*, pp. 18, 54-55; *Education in Muslim India*, pp. 39-52 and 206; *J.A.S.B.* (1935) Vol. I, pp. 150-5 and 187 ff.; and *The Mughal Empire From Babar To Aurangzeb*, p. 394.



accordance with their inherent aptitudes is quite natural and conducive to their mutual well-being. The notions that woman in Islām has no soul and that she is the toy of her husband in his idle hours are absolutely unfounded and betray either a complete ignorance of the teachings of Islām or a bitter enmity against it. Some of the verses\* of the *Qur-ān* and the sayings† of the Prophet Muhammad clearly indicate her position and the laws of marriage and divorce, of inheritance and widow-marriage are meant for her protection. Her chastity has been greatly emphasized by the Prophet of Islām. As a result, her honour has always been jealously guarded by the followers of Islām. The very word '*Haram*' (*Zenāna*) signifies something sacred and shows that she was held in honour verging on veneration. She was not allowed to mix freely with men: The fear that the members of opposite sexes are apt to go wrong if allowed to mix and move freely always haunted the minds of elderly patriarchs and it was therefore that they spared nothing to prevent the possibility of their womens' meeting and mixing with *Nāmehrāms* (those with whom *Nikāh* can be contracted) and thus going wrong. The precaution was identified in the long run with living in seclusion

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\* *Al-Qur-ān*, Chapter II, Verses 228-29; and Chapter IV, Verses 1, 3, 4, 7.

† "Paradise lies at the feet of mothers."—Muhammad. The best of you is one who is the best in his treatment towards his wife."—Muhammad.

or *Pardah*. The testimony of the contemporary chroniclers and foreign travellers shows that in Muslim India great importance was attached to the spotless character of women and the public reputation of girls for chastity. The greater the importance attached to the moral reputation of girls, the greater the rigidity of the *Pardah*.

Mention may appropriately be made about the *Pardah* system. the *Pardah* system, referred to above. The origin of this ancient institution is wrapped in the mist of antiquity. According to some scholars, women of Hindūstān moved about freely before the advent of Islām and that it was, therefore, the Musalmāns who introduced the system in this country. This is a mistake that betrays a complete ignorance of ancient Indian history. Since the system of seclusion, as it exists to-day, has been subjected to a most adverse criticism, some Indian enthusiasts have begun to disown it, declaring it as foreign to the soil and attributing its existence in India to extraneous influences. In order to bring out the truth, it is necessary to deal with the subject at some length. There are a number of references to the observance of a very strict *Pardah* in the sacred literature of the Hindūs. Let us take the two great epics, viz., the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*, the most important landmarks of ancient Hindū culture and civilization. A perusal of these two sacred books of remote

antiquity will show that seclusion in a very strict form was in existence in the India of those times, when, for instance, ladies like Sītā and Dhropdī could claim that the sun and the wind, nay even the gods, had not seen their persons. When Sītā came out of her seclusion in order to accompany her husband, Rāmā, to the jungle, the people took exception to her appearance in public and exclaimed: "How bad times have become that Sītā, of whom the gods could not obtain a glimpse, has now come out to face the vulgar gaze."\* There is another episode in the *Rāmāyana*, in which it is related that after the conquest of Lankā (Ceylon) when Rāmā asked his wife, Sītā, to be brought to his presence, his courtiers began to clear the hall of men, whereupon Rāmā, than whom there could be no greater authority on Hindū scriptures, addressed them in the following words:—

"Listen gentlemen! On the occasion of grief or helplessness, or war, or the ceremony of choosing a husband, or a sacred sacrifice, or matrimony, it is no sin for a woman to come out of her seclusion, or for men to cast their looks on her. This Sītā is grief-stricken and helpless, and there is no harm if she comes before men, especially in my presence."†

From the above passage it is clear that it was a sin for women to appear in public and

\* *Rāmāyana*, *Podhā Kandam*, *Swarj* 33, *Sloka* 197.

† *Ibid.*, *Yudh Kandam*, *Swarj* 114, *Sloka* 942.

hence *Pardah* was a religious duty. It is also stated in the *Rāmāyana* that when Sītā was brought out of her seclusion and ushered in her husband's presence, she felt so shy that she bent low and could not walk "as if she was covering herself in her own body."\* The *Mahābhārata* also contains similar references to the strict seclusion of women. When Yudhishtira lost his wife, Dhropdī, in a gambling match and when the winner, Daryodhana, tried to take her out in the open, she cried out: "The Rājas had seen me only on the occasion of choosing a husband (*Swayambra*). No one saw me ever before or after it. Even the sun and the winds could not see me. But misfortune has forced me to appear before men to-day. Alas! The Rājas have lost their ancient faith (Sanātan Dharam). No gentleman ever brought his wife before men. But, alas, now religion finds no place in the family."† Almost the same rules regarding *Pardah* existed in the Puranic times. When, for instance, Raja Manas, the uncle of Raja Śrī Krishna, held a wrestling match in Muttra and invited his fellow Rājas from far and near to attend it, he constructed separate enclosures for women in such a way 'that they seemed to be floating high in the air, and thin porous cloth was drawn over to let the women watch the match below.'‡

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\* *Ibid.* † *Mahābhārata*, *Sloka* 4, 5, 8, 9, *Sabha Paroh*, *Adhyāya* 69, p. 61.

‡ See *Hariwans Purāna*, *Vishnu Paroh*, *Adhyāya* 19.

The public appearance of women is emphatically condemned and is regarded as a feature of *Kalyug* (age of decline) in the *Brahma Purāna*.<sup>\*</sup> The lighter literature too is not silent on the subject: Veil is mentioned as a mark of nobility in the *Harsha-Charita* of of Bānā.<sup>†</sup> On seeing Shakuntala for the first time, Rāja Dushyant exclaimed: "This appears to be a fully veiled girl, who has covered her body so closely that her body is completely hidden. In the house of these mendicants she appears to be a little sapling covered with dry leaves."<sup>‡</sup> Seclusion finds mention in the *Arthāshāstra* as well. In it we come across 'laws for making contracts between women who lived in seclusion and others which are absolutely peculiar to such women.'<sup>§</sup> Thus there can be no doubt that *Pardah* is an ancient indigenous institution and has been in existence in India from times immemorial. According to Mrs. Frieda H. Dass, "It arose along with the division of persons into high and low castes and the seclusion of women became the hallmark of aristocracy". According to Mr. N. C. Mehta, "It is, of course, untrue that Islām brought the *Pardah* into this country. Seclusion of women can be traced in all ancient communities and

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<sup>\*</sup> *Brahma Purāna*, Sloka 39, Adhyāya 22.

<sup>†</sup> *Harshā Charita* of Bānā, Act I, Scene 3.

<sup>‡</sup> *Shakuntala* Ankor, Sloka, 13.

<sup>§</sup> Kautilya's *Arthāshāstra* edited by Shama Shastri, p. 188 of English translation.

it was particularly among the aristocracy during the palmy days of Hindū civilization. Indian Muslims followed the custom of the country and adopted the prevailing hallmark of gentility."<sup>\*</sup> Mr. Mehta's view derives additional support from the fact that most of the Indian Muslims, as has been stated more than once, were Indian by birth, race and descent and naturally therefore they kept up the customs and traditions they inherited as a legacy from their forefathers. Thus while the rich had elaborate arrangements of *Pardah*, the poor began to use what is now known as *Burqa*.

Something may also be said here about the Islamic *Pardah*. According to the *Qur-ān*, the greatest guide of the Musalmāns, women can move about and earn their living, but they have to cast down their eyes and to conceal those parts of their body that are apt to excite passions, and not to display their ornaments.† Students of Islamic history know that during the lifetime of the Prophet women used to accompany their men to the holy wars and serve as nurses and do other odd jobs. History also shows that women attended mosques as well, though this feature has become rather rare, if not altogether extinct. We also read of numerous lady lecturers, professors and orators, scholars and poetesses in the hagiology of Islām.‡

<sup>\*</sup> Also see *Ancient Hindu Polity*, by N.N. Law p. 144.

† *Vide Al-Qur ān*, Chapter XXIV, Verses 30-31.

‡ See *A Short History of the Saracens*, pp. 200 ff.

We may then conclude that women in ancient India were excluded from mixing with men and we learn that they moved the lapel of their *Sārīs* or other head-wears slightly over their face when they passed by a stranger. In other words, they did observe a certain amount of *Pardah* by using a veil which now passes under the name of *Ghunghat* and at times it was quite as rigid, elaborate and institutionalized as it was during the Muslim Period on account of the meeting of different cultures. Thus we know for certain that the exclusion of women from male society was common among the Hindūs of old and that home was their sphere. When the Musalmāns appeared on the stage of Indian history, they brought with them their own ideas about *Pardah*, which they had borrowed from the Persians in common with several other institutions. Apart from the sense of insecurity occasioned by the inroads of the invaders, which continued for so many centuries, the differences of cultures and conceptions of morality were other factors which contributed to the rigidity of the *Pardah* in this country. The position may be summed up as follows: The masses, consisting mostly of peasant women, moved about freely without wearing any veil or shrouds whatever; they did not live in seclusion and observed only *Ghunghat*. Respectable ladies went about in litters called *Dolīs* which were carried sometimes by two and sometimes by four *Kahārs* or *Doli-bearers*, accompanied by their male servants

or eunuchs. The women of middle classes used what are now called *Burqās* or long garments, covering their heads and coming down to their ankles.\*

**Politically**—Islām enjoined toleration, opened careers to talents and emphasized the protection of the person and property of the people, rich and poor, of all classes. It united the peoples of India into a nation which, when required, offered a united front to a common enemy — Hindū or Muslim. India before the advent of Islām was a geographical expression, a congeries of small states, each aiming at its own aggrandizement and cherishing its own autonomy, grudgingly acknowledging, if ever, the supremacy of a common suzerain. Muslim domination broke up the numerous centres of independent authority, supplanted the series of small states, whose rulers stood between the Central Government and its subjects, and thus brought about the political unification of India and created a sense of greater allegiance to the power enthroned at the centre. **Socially**—Islām levelled all social inequalities, condemned caste-restrictions and introduced a number of radical changes in Hindū society. It discouraged slavery, *Satī* and

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\* *Vide J. A. S. B.* (1935), Vol. I, pp. 342 ff. and Mr. N.C. Mehta's article on *Pardah* in *The Leader* (Allahabad) May, 1928. I am also indebted to Dr. S. N. A. Jafri's article on '*Pardah—Indian and Islamic*' for some information on the subject.



infanticide. It also encouraged widow marriage and as a result of its influence, widows came to be treated with greater respect and the status of women was raised considerably high in the social scale. Some of the people gave up burning their dead and began to bury them. Inter-dining and inter-marriages also became popular among the Hindūs of several classes. Islām also minimized the importance of birth and heredity and its influence quickened in Hindūism the feelings of social equality and brotherhood and tended to break down all social barriers and to bridge the gulf existing between the various classes of Hindūs on the one hand and the Hindūs and Muslims on the other.

**Religiously** — Islām had a far greater influence. It won numerous converts from all classes, more particularly from those to which Hindūism had assigned a low position. Those who still clung to their old religion were indirectly influenced by the teachings of Islām. The monotheistic doctrine, though preached and propagated by the *Vedās*, was cast to the corner and numerous forms of idolatry were substituted for divine worship, so much so that almost every individual had his or her own god or gods who were worshipped and from whom aid was invoked in all misfortunes. The appearance of Islām in India and the introduction of monotheism revolutionized the religious life of the Hindūs and in course of time the intelligentsia among them began to believe and declare that they did not worship the idols as gods but used them as

aids to concentration of thought and that though they appeared to worship them, in reality they worshipped Him to whom alone worship was due. The influence of Islām which has filtered down to our own times, can be easily traced in the changed attitude of the Hindūs. The *Bhakti* Movement, to which we will presently revert, was an important result of that influence : Its preachers and prophets had all drunk deep at the fountain of Islām. The Sikhs and the Sidhārs, the Kabīr-Panthīs and the Aryāsamājists — to name but a few of the offshoots of that movement — derived their inspiration from one source, that is Islām, and though they have drifted very largely away from the parent-source and have adopted a militant attitude against it, they owe a lasting debt of gratitude to it. Islām revived monotheism and restored the spiritual unity of India. It also dealt a rude shock to the supremacy of the Brahmans and broke their monopoly of spiritual knowledge, emphasized the democratic side of religion, sounded the spiritual enfranchisement of the Shudras and opened the portals of religion which had not so far been open to them. It also shook the belief of a number of Hindūs in transmigration and went a long way in removing the illusion that the soul travels along the unending wheel of births and deaths. It engrafted on the Hindū mind the belief in the day of judgment and the principles of *Jazā* and *Sazā*, i.e., reward and punishment, in the eternal life after death. **Culturally** — Islām

contributed no less to the culture of the Hindūs. The Musalmāns who came into India, made it their permanent abode and naturalized in it. For them it was impossible to live in the land of the Hindūs in a state of perennial hostility. Living together led to mutual intercourse and to mutual understanding. In course of time the force of circumstances compelled them to find out a *via media* whereby to live together as friendly neighbours. They evolved out a new language out of the warf and woof of Persian and Sanskrit, and the current of common culture, Hindū-Muslim, abandoned its ancient beds and began to flow through this new channel, Urdū. The culture that was thus evolved was neither purely Muslim nor exclusively Hindū, but a happy union of both. The Muslim Kings and Chiefs encouraged Hindū arts and literature, sciences and philosophy and opened the doors of their schools and seminaries to all and sundry, without any restrictions of rank, race or religion. Like saints and sages, they too, in their own spheres, tried to bring about an approximation between the Hindūs and the Muslims.\* The result was an almost complete reconciliation of the two. It need not occasion surprise, therefore, if "the Hindūs offered sweets at Muslim shrines, consulted the *Qoran*

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\* The *Din-i-Ilāhī* of Akbar was not an isolated freak of an autocrat and Akbar's was not a solitary attempt; for many before him had tried the experiment for establishing universal peace in India.

as an oracle, kept its copies to ward off evil influence and celebrated Muslim feasts, and the Musalmāns responded with similar acts".\* It is indeed most unfortunate that they should forget their cordial relations of the past and become the bitterest enemies of each other now.

Thus under the edifying influence of Islām not only did Hindū religion and polity, Hindū art and literature, Hindū science and philosophy absorb Muslim elements, but the entire spirit of Hindū culture and the very mould of Hindū mind were modified.

We have traced the influence of Islām on Hindū life in its various phases. Let us now consider the influence of Hindū caste and culture on Indian Musalmāns. Since a vast majority of Indian Muslims were drawn from the masses of the Hindūs, their social position and culture did not change all at once, though they decidedly improved in many ways. They had changed their religion no doubt, but they still retained their ancient customs and practices, habits and hobbies. The change of religion did not change their environments and atmosphere, which were permeated through and through with social isolation, superstitious ideas and caste restrictions. The result was the Indo-Muslim Society, which incorporated a number of Hindū social features.

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\* See *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 217.

The *Bhakti* Movement, referred to above, was the inevitable outcome of the interaction of Islām and Hindūism. The term '*Bhakti*' has been defined as the worship of one God, devotion to Him and dedication of everything to His service. The preachers and prophets of this creed, viz., Rāmānanda, Kabīr, Dādū, Nānak, Chaitānaya and many others, who lived and laboured during the middle of the period under review, were all immensely influenced by the spirit of Islām. Though they differed on different points and founded their own sects, they all agreed on one important point: They denounced idolatry in the bitterest of terms and preached and propagated the unity of God. They tried to reconcile Hindūism with Islām and to promote the unity of India. They recognized no difference between Rām and Rahīm, Kesvara and Karīm, Ka'ba and Kailāsh, *Qur-ān* and *Purān* and taught that *Karma* is *Dharma*. They preached peace and propagated the principle that everyone should try to add to human happiness, and thus pointed to the people that the shortest route to approach God is through the people. But though their central theme was God and though their minds were deeply imbued with Islām, they left it in the midway in that they did not accept its principles and practices in toto. It was left to their successors to understand their object and to appreciate their importance.\*

\**The Mughal Empire From Babar To Aurangzeb*, p. 317.

## CHAPTER XII

### ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The early emperors of India had very little experience in economic matters and absolutely no knowledge of the economic conditions of the country (India) they conquered and therefore required time to adapt themselves to their new economic environments. Apart from this drawback, their political pre-occupations left but little leisure at their disposal to take interest in such affairs; but no sooner were they able to establish their authority and restore law and order than they began to devote their attention and energy to the economic development of the country under their control. For the reasons already stated, the material for constructing the economic history of the period under consideration is very meagre and hence this chapter is bound to be sketchy. Nevertheless, it will be found to contain enough to enable one to arrive at fairly correct conclusions about the interest taken in and the contributions made by the Muslim Kings to the economic development of India.

We begin with agriculture, the mainstay of Indian economic life. India was, as she has continued to be, an agricultural country and a vast majority of

her population depended on agriculture, whether directly or indirectly. The land was extremely fertile and its productivity was extraordinary. It was rich in mineral wealth and material resources. It was equally vast and almost limitless in extent. The produce from it was pretty much the same in nature as it is to-day, though it must have been somewhat better in quality because land was not subjected to such intensive cultivation as has now become necessary in order to keep pace with the growing population. The means and methods of cultivation then in vogue have survived to our own times. The Emperors of Delhi as well as the provincial governors and independent rulers of provincial kingdoms understood and encouraged agriculture as far as possible. They introduced the Persian-wheel and began digging wells and canals in this country. The names of many of them are intimately associated with the sinking of wells and the construction of canals in the tracts where rainfall was scanty. This was doubtless an important improvement on the existing means of irrigation and an enduring contribution to Indian agriculture. Waste lands were reclaimed and brought under cultivation and no damage to the standing crops was tolerated. Above all, the welfare of the cultivating classes was duly secured. Of the entire produce of the land under cultivation, usually  $\frac{1}{4}$ th, but sometimes  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd, was claimed by the State as its

share.\* The fact that the land was almost limitless in extent set serious limits to its collection. Of the remaining produce, some was given to a certain number of classes, such as servants and menials by way of customary dues and the rest was retained by the peasants for their own daily use or for use on such occasions as birth, marriage and death as well as for use in bad days.

Life had few pleasures for the peasants of that period. Given timely and favourable monsoons and a sympathetic government, they were quite happy and content with their lot. In the days of drought, they in general and their womenfolk in particular resorted to their personal deities (for they were mostly Hindūs), offered prayers and in response watched eagerly towards the sky and anxiously awaited the clouds with their eyes full of tears and hearts full of hopes. In their worst calamities and most adverse circumstances, they reconciled themselves to the irresistible workings of fate and attributed all their misfortunes to *Qismat* (destiny). Their standard of living was very low and life had but few attractions for them. Once it is said that they moved about almost naked, wearing only a *Langoti* and a small shirt, the topic of clothing

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\* See pp. 38, ff., where the land revenue system has been dealt with at some length.



is practically exhausted and then there remains little to comment upon furniture when the furniture of a family and other possessions consisted of a few bedsteads and cooking utensils, most of which were earthen. It may, however, be pointed out here that during the Muslim Period the standard of living of an average peasant had considerably improved.\*

We have said something about agriculture.

Cottage Industries. Let us now turn to the industries of India. A large number of industries and crafts were fed on the surplus of agricultural produce, of which there was always ample to spend and spare. The most important manufactures which flourished on agricultural produce were ropes, baskets, unrefined sugar (*Gur*), oils of various kinds, scents and spirits.†

Industrial Development under the Sultānat. The accounts of the contemporary chroniclers of the country as well as foreign travellers show that industries of considerable importance and magnitude were developed during the period under review. The biggest of them was the manufacture of textiles of all kinds, such as cotton cloth, woolen cloth and silks. The manufacture of cotton cloth attained classical

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\* J. A. S. B., Vol. I., (1635), pp. 196.

† See *Ibid.*, pp. 196 and 203.

perfection and became proverbial all over the world. Other important industries were wood-work, stone-work, metal-work, leather-work, embroidery, indigo and paper. The factories were known as *Kārkhānas* or workshops. They were supported by the State as well as by enterprising businessmen. Almost all the Sultāns of Delhi maintained big *Kārkhānas*, where vast stores of silk and fine muslin were manufactured for the use of the Imperial *Haram* and courtiers. We are informed that 'the royal factories at Delhi sometimes employed as many as 4,000 weavers of silk alone besides manufacturers for other kinds of goods for the royal supply'. Similarly, Muhammad Tughluq is said to have employed 'no less than 4,000 manufacturers of golden tissues for brocades used by ladies of the royal *haram* or given away in presents to *amīrs* and their wives'. Almost all articles of royal use *e.g.*, caps, shoes, curtains, saddles, embroideries, tapestries, waistbands, sashes, *etc.*, were supplied by these *Kārkhānas*. It may be observed here that if arts and industries flourished abundantly during the early Muslim period, it was mainly due to the patronage of the State.\*

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\* *Vide J. A. S. B.*, Vol. I, (1935), pp. 205 ff., *Education in Muslim India*, Chapter XIII, pp. 199 ff. Elliot, Vol. III, pp. 105, 303, 340-41, 347 and 578; *Travels of Marco Polo*, Vol. II, pp. 278 and 328; J. R. A. S. (1895), pp. 531-32; and *Travels of Ibn-Batūta*.

Industries of considerable importance and proportions flourished in the provincial kingdoms under the patronage of their independent rulers. Gujarāt and Bengāl are said to have led the whole of India in the manufacture and export of textile goods. The harbour facilities that they enjoyed as well as their commercial relations with other countries enabled them to build a textile industry of a vast magnitude. Mahuan, Varthema and Barbosa are warm in their praises of the textiles of Bengāl, particularly cotton cloth, muslins, gold embroidered caps and silk handkerchiefs, which were manufactured in large quantities to meet internal as well as external demand. Gujarāt was likewise famous for the manufacture of cotton and silk cloth. Barbosa informs us that Cambay (Khambāyat) was an important centre of manufacture for all kinds of course and fine cloth. We also learn that varieties of velvets, thick carpets, 'silk-muslins', satins, taffetas and printed cloth were manufactured in other parts of Gujarāt also. Barbosa was greatly impressed by the 'very fine work' of 'the very good goldsmiths' of Gujarāt. Mahadevānagrī and Deogīr in the Deccan were equally important centres of cloth manufacture. The cloth made there was 'of exceptional fineness and beauty'. According to Amīr Khusrau, it was so fine as to tempt a fairy.\*

\* Barbosa, Vol. I, pp. 141-42, 154-55 and Vol. II, p. 154; Varthema, p. 212; *J. R. A. S.* (1895), p. 532; and *J. A. S. B.* (1935), pp. 307 ff.

The Mughal Period, marked for mighty advances in almost every department of human life, was no less renowned for a high tide of industrial development. Bābar had no time to devote to the industrial improvement of the newly conquered country, yet it was he who founded the *Shuhrat-i-'Am* or Public Works Department which later on played such an important part in the industrial development of the country. His son, Humāyūn, too had little leisure from his political pre-occupations, still he set the ball rolling by actively patronizing such artistic skill as was displayed in the construction of *Qasr-i-rawān*, (moving-palace), *Bāgh-i-rawān*, (moving-garden), and *Bazar-i-rawān* (moving-bazar), which were built on boats and set afloat on the Jumna.\* Akbar the Great organized the Public Works Department anew and personally inspected the *Kārkhānas* (work-shops) at times. During his reign crafts and other fine textiles were manufactured at Agra and Fatehpur Sīkrī, good cotton cloth at Patan in Gujarāt and at Burhānpur in Khāndesh, while Sunārgaon was famous for its fine fabrics, 'the best and finest cloth made of cotton all over India'. The finished products produced under his patronage were such as are said to have done credit to the artisans of the twentieth century. Ship-building was also an important industry in those days.

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\* *The Mughal Empire From Bābar To Aurangzeb*, p.42

Under Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān arts and crafts, industries and commerce flourished in India as never before during the Muslim Period. This is borne out by the cumulative testimony of native historians as well as foreign travellers who visited India during that period. Among others, Sir Thomas Roe has paid a well-deserved tribute to the skill of Indian artisans of Jahāngīr's reign,\* Bernier, who visited India during the reigns of Shāh Jahān and Aurangzeb, was no less impressed by the affluence and efflorescence of fine arts and the industrial advance of the country. He dwells at length on the achievements of the Kashmīrīs in arts and crafts, describes the manufacture of *shawls* in Kashmīr, Agra, Patna and Lāhore, of chintzes in Masulipatam, and gives a graphic description of the *Kārkhānas*, where arts and crafts were learnt and plied.†

Industrially, therefore, India under the Muslim rulers was in no way inferior to any other country of the world or to the India of the pre-Muslim period. Her industrial position during that period is very ably summed up by the Industrial Commission in the following words:—

“At a time when the west of Europe, the birth-place of modern industrial system, was inhabited by uncivilised tribes, India was

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\* *The History of India*, by Elphinstone, p. 489.

† See *Bernier's Travels*, pp. 258-59, and 402-04.

famous for the wealth of her rulers and for the high artistic skill of her craftsmen. And even at a much later period, when the merchant adventurers from the west made their first appearance in India, the industrial development of the country was, at any rate, not inferior to that of more advanced European nations.”\*

This view of the Industrial Commission is shared and supported by many other distinguished authorities on the subject, *e.g.*

“The skill of the Indians in the production of delicate woven fabrics, in the mixing of colours, the working of metals and precious stones and in all manner of technical arts has, from very early times, enjoyed a world-wide celebrity.”† — Professor Weber.

“The industry not only supplied all local wants but also enabled India to export its finished products to foreign countries.”‡ — Ranade.

“It was this trade and prosperity that attracted the European traders to India. Their rivalry to secure a footing in India at that time was occasioned not by the raw materials of the country but by the value and variety of her

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\* *Report of Industrial Commission* (1918), p. 1.

† *Ibid.*, (Minute of Dissent), p. 295.

‡ *Essays on Indian Economics*, by Ranade, p. 171

manufactures and crafts."\* — Professors Jather and Beri.

India was self-sufficient in almost every respect. She had always enough to spend in and to send out. The *Banjāras* carried on the business of conveying the surplus produce from one part of the country to another on a fairly large scale. It is not possible to give an exact estimate of the volume of internal trade, but a fairly correct idea can be conveyed by saying that villages, with their *Mandis* (markets), were brisk centres of trade where exchanges of commodities took place in peaceful times. Delhi and other capital cities were the centres of internal trade of their respective territories and the scenes of brisk trade activities. The volume of internal trade, we may roughly say, was fairly large.†

From times immemorial India has had commercial relations with foreign countries. The few articles that were imported from outside were the articles of luxury for the use of upper classes. Horses and mules of all kinds were imported from other countries. Apart from the enormous demand for these animals for military purposes, they were also employed for conveyance, racing and riding. The exports of India were

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\* *Indian Economics* by Jather and Beri, Vol. I, p. 131.

† J. A. S. B. (1935), Vol. I, pp. 215-16.

numerous, the most important among them being precious stones, indigo, cotton, hides and skins and 'many other kinds of merchandise, too tedious to mention.' Wheat, millet, rice, pulses, oilseeds, scents, *etc.*, were also among the principal exports of agricultural produce. Needless to say that the foreign demand for the fine muslin of Dacca and the beautiful *shawls* of Kashmīr was very great.\*

The system of borrowing and lending money on interest has been in Money-lending. vogue in India since long. *Tamassuks* (bonds) were regularly executed and the rate of interest was fixed by the State in accordance with the law which provided elaborate rules for the production and examination of evidence, both oral and documentary, on the subject. The *Sāṅkhārs* (money-lenders) and *Mahājans* (bankers) were very popular with the people who had loose habits and were given to luxury. High, and sometimes too high, rates of interest were charged and the system of usurious loans and compound rates of interest enormously added to the extent of indebtedness of poor peasants who borrowed huge sums of money for purposes of consumption and could not pay even the principal amounts. It can be gathered from the stray statements of Amīr Khusrau on the subject

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† *Ibid.*, pp. 220 ff. ; and *The Splendour That Was Ind.*, pp. 186 ff.



that 10 % per annum interest was charged on big sums and 20 % per annum on petty amounts.\*

Coins of gold, silver and copper (of various denominations) were current during the Muslim period. They were of pure metal and standard weight. With the solitary exception of Sultān 'Alā-ud-Dīn Khiljī, who alone is said to have made an attempt at debasing his coinage by reducing the weight of the silver *Tanka* from 175 to 140 grains of silver, no Muslim king is said to have debased his currency. The only attempt of Muhammad Tughluq to introduce token currency failed in spite of the wisdom of the choice. The earliest coins that we come across at the dawn of our period were *Delhiwāls*. The *Jitals* were only a continuation of the *Delhiwāls* of the pre-Muslim period. During the reign of Sultān Bahlol Lodhī, the *Jitals* were replaced by the *Bahlolīs*. The silver *Tanka*, weighing 175 grains, was first introduced by Sultān Shams-ud-Dīn Iltūtmish and continued as a standard coin or legal tender throughout the Muslim period. The Muslim Kings maintained the older division of silver coins into copper coins. Under them one silver *Tanka* consisted of 64 *Jitals* or *Kānis* of copper. One *Hasht-Kāni* was equal to eight *Kānis* or eight *Jitals*. The *Bahlolī* was reckoned at

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\* Vide J. A. S. B. (1935), Vol. I, p. 218.

1/4th of the *Tanka*. Sultān Sikandar Lodhī instituted the copper *Tanka*, twenty of which went to make one silver coin of the same name. Gold *Mohars* were also used but were not in daily circulation and were not employed as a money of account. The ratio of gold to silver was 1 : 8 in the early Muslim period. It fell to 1 : 7 after the conquest of the Deccan by 'Alā-ud-Dīn Khiljī, and was 1:9.4 at the time of Sher Shāh Sūrī. An important feature of the coins current in those times was the monetary rather than token value. It was for this reason that under certain circumstances goldsmiths, silver-smiths and dealers in bullion in the South were permitted to manufacture coins of correct weight and intrinsic value by prescriptive right. During the Mughal Period the currency of India underwent considerable improvement in purity, weight and artistic execution. Akbar's extremely varied coinage richly deserves the showers of praises bestowed on it on account of its excellence both as regards the purity of metal, the fullness of weight and artistic execution. It may be observed here that neither Akbar nor his successors ever submitted to the temptation of debasing coinage either in weight or in purity, so that Smith is fully justified in pronouncing the Mughal currency as far superior to that of Queen Elizabeth and other contemporary sovereigns of Europe.\*

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\* J. A. S. B., (1935), Vol. I, pp. 339-41; and *The*

(See page 222)

Weights and measures differed in weight and number in different places and with different classes of people, so that there was absolutely no uniformity. The official weights under the Sultāns have been fixed by a modern scholar in concurrence with others, 'at an average of 28·78 lbs. avoirdupois to a maund (*Man*) or a little over a quarter of an hundredweight or less than half a bushel of wheat'. This is by no means an exact calculation. The different weights were *Mans*, *Seers* and *Chhatāns*, which have survived to our own times. *Kroh* or what is now called *Kos*, was the popular measurement of distance. It was about two miles according to our present reckoning. For the sake of convenience it was divided into three parts, each of which was called a *Dhāwa*. The yard, with which length was measured, was not uniform either. It differed in different places and for different commodities. Roughly calculated, the ratio between our present yard and the old Indian *Gaz* (yard) comes to 6 : 5, the former being slightly more in length. As regards the measuring of time, a year consisted of twelve lunar months and a day and night together went to make eight *Pahars*, each *Pahar* being equal to three hours of our present standard. A *Pahar* was subdivided into sixty *Gharis*, each *Gharī* equalling twenty-four minutes of our modern time. A *Gharī* was further subdivided

into sixty *Pals*. Clepsydras were in use for measuring time and *Gharyāls* (gongs) were used for announcing hours in principal towns and cities.\*

Since the standard of living differed with different classes, it is not easy to estimate the average cost of living. Though there are many references to the incomes of persons and the prices of various commodities in various periods in the accounts of the contemporary chroniclers, yet there can be no guarantee for the correctness of the results obtained on their basis or the accuracy of the conclusions drawn from them. It is estimated that a *Tanka* (rupee) would have purchased then twelve times the necessities that a rupee did before 1914. This is indeed a rough estimate made by scholars after making due allowance for other things. Taking the wages of Muhammad Tughluq's and Firoz Thughluq's slaves, they have estimated the minimum monthly income of one slave at ten *Tankas*. The soldiers, we are informed, were paid twenty *Tankas* each per month. Taking the prices of the commodities of the various periods, the cost of living works out at five *Tankas* per month for an average family, consisting of a man, his wife, one or two children and a servant. The cost of living was, therefore, very cheap,

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\* J. A. S. B., (1935), Vol I, pp. 341-42.

much cheaper than it is at present and the people were decidedly better off.\*

As regards the Mughal Period, reliable statistics are available to show that an average workman of those times was better off than his brother of to-day. It is estimated that a rupee in terms of important food-grains such as wheat, barley, rice, gram, *jowar*, *ghee*, etc., was, three centuries ago, worth thirteen times as much as a rupee of to-day. The average daily wage of an ordinary workman, as worked out by competent scholars, is 2.7 *d.* If Coryat, an English traveller, with a superior standard of living, could maintain himself "very competently" in his travels through the Mughal Empire, "with meate, drinke and clothes", for 2 *d.* a day,† we can safely say that a common labourer and a

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\* See *J. A. S. B.*, Vol. 1, pp. 233 ff. and pp. 241-43.

† In one of his letters Coryat writes: "At this present I have in the city of Agra...about twelve pounds sterling, which, according to my maner of living uppon the way at two-pence sterling a day (for with that proportion I can live pretty well, such is the cheapnes of all eatable things...), will mainetaine mee very competently three yeares in my travell with meate, drinke and clothes". (*Early Travels in India*, p. 267). In another letter he writes: "I spent my ten moneths travels betwixt Aleppo and the Moguls court but three pounds sterling, yet fared reasonable well everie daie; victuals beeing so cheape in some countries where I travelled, that I oftentimes lived competently for a pennie sterling a day. (*Ibid.*, p. 248).

native of the country could maintain himself quite comfortably with an income of 2.7 *d.* per day. Dr. Smith says that "a man could live on 1 *d.* to 2 *d.* a day". The inference is self-evident. While comparing a farmer of Akbar's times with one of these days belonging to Lyallpur, the most opulent of his class in India, Professor Brij Narain comes to the conclusion that the former was more prosperous than the latter.\* Dr. V. A. Smith and Mr. W. H. Moreland also hold the same view, for both of them admit that in Akbar's time an ordinary labourer had more to eat than he has in these days and was therefore happier in those days than in these.† If the lot of the cultivators of those times was happy, it was because instructions to the collectors of land revenue were couched in extremely humanitarian terms and worked with remarkable lenity,

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\* See *The Mughal Empire From Babar To Aurangzeb* and *Indian Economic Life*.

† In his book '*From Akbar to Aurangzeb*', however, Mr. Moreland comes to a different conclusion and says that the condition of the peasantry deteriorated a great deal during the reigns of Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān and became still worse in the reign of Aurangzeb. I have not found it possible to agree with Mr. Moreland and my own impression is that conditions during the reigns of Jahāngīr, Shāh Jahān and Aurangzeb remained much the same as under Akbar the Great. Mr. Faruki has dealt with the subject at some length in his scholarly monograph '*Aurangzeb and His Times*', and for the present I must content myself with referring the reader to pages 470 ff. of that book. The reader should read both the versions and draw his own conclusions.

liberal concessions were granted to the cultivators in bad times, rebates and remissions were not grudged, and their interests were duly safeguarded. Nor must we fail to take note of the difference between the economic conditions of these times and those of Mughal India. Mr. Moreland says that land was cultivated in small holdings in the seventeenth century, but leaves us in the dark as to the average size of a holding. That it was larger than the average holding of to-day cannot be doubted, because larger proportion of population is now supported by land than in those times. Moreover, the yield per acre in those days must have been much greater than at present because of the depreciation in the quality of land caused by more intensive cultivation in order to keep pace with the increase in population. Even if it be supposed for the sake of argument that the fertility of the land then under cultivation has not diminished during the last three hundred years, which is far from possible, we cannot but admit that extensive cultivation, necessitated by growing population, embracing inferior lands, must result in the decrease of average produce.

On the whole, therefore, the Muslim Period was characterized by economic prosperity. Doubtless there were intervals of economic distress, occasioned by an invasion or a famine, but such times were rare and then we know that, generally speaking, the State spared no effort to restore normal conditions.

## CONCLUSION

Achievements  
of  
Muslim rulers.

We have now come to the close of our study and are now in a position to sum up the subject. A perusal of the preceding pages must have impressed upon the mind of the reader the fact that the Muslim rulers of India were great kings and remarkable administrators. The political unification of India, which they accomplished but which their Hindū predecessors had not in spite of their earnest endeavours, bears eloquent testimony to their military genius. . But they were great not only as conquerors; they were equally great as rulers: They were richly endowed with administrative talents, but for which they might not have established their rule and guided the destinies of India for so many centuries. Where they got their administrative talents from is not difficult to explain: They were inherent, inborn, intuitive and not acquired. With few exceptions, they all identified themselves with the welfare of their subjects, irrespective of their caste or creed, protected them from external invasions, relieved them from the oppression of native tyrants and earned their everlasting gratitude. This made their rule not only possible but also popular. They made India their home and contributed very vastly to her wealth of civilization.



The extent of their influence on India cannot be over-estimated. It has flowed down to our own times and can be traced in almost all the departments of Indian life. It manifests itself most supremely in the changed religious outlook of the Hindūs about God, in the spiritual enfranchisement of the Shudras, in the intellectual emancipation of all classes, in the details of domestic life, in the development of dress, in the celebration of fairs and festivals, in art and literature, in the ceremonial of marriage, in the customs and institutions of the courts of Rājput, Marhatta and Sikh Princes,—in fact in the entire paraphernalia of Indian civilization. On his arrival in India if Bābar found the Hindūs and Muslims living peacefully side by side as friendly neighbours and if the two communities thought so much alike that he noticed their peculiar 'Hindustānī way', it was largely due to the influence of Islām. His illustrious successors 'so gloriously adorned and so marvellously enriched this legacy that India might well be proud to-day of the heritage which they in their turn have left behind'.\* There is no doubt that India reached the pinnacle of her greatness under the Great Mughals, yet the times of the Turks and the age of the Afghāns do not fall far behind the era of the Mughal Emperors. In intellectual culture, Amīr Khusrau, Malik Muhammad Jaisī,

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\* *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, by Tara Chand, p. 142.

Chāndī Dāss and Mukand Rām stand side by side with *Allāma* Abul Fazl, Sa'dullāh Khan, Todar Mal, and Chandar Bhān of the Mughal Period. Tulsī Dāss was indeed an unrivalled figure of the age in so far as religious poetry was concerned, but the soil that produced him was prepared long before the Mughals had appeared on the stage of Indian history. In art and architecture, the glories of Shāh Jahān's reign were still in the womb of the future, but the artistic and architectural achievements of the preceding period are by no means inferior, particularly when allowance is made for the time scanning the interval between the fall of the Sultānat after Firoz Shāh Tughluq and the establishment of the Bādshāhat (Mughal Empire) under Akbar the Great. While the Mughal Period may justly be proud of the *Tāj*, an epic in stone, the period preceding it has to its credit the *Qutb Minār*, 'the loftiest and most beautiful of its class in the world'. While comparing these superb structures, it must be noted that the former was constructed some four centuries after the construction of the latter and in a relatively much settled and advanced state of affairs. In music, Amīr Khusrau was quite as unrivalled in his time as Miān Tānsen in his. In the field of administration, we cannot deny the claims of the Mughal Emperors, who were talented administrators, but the administrative achievements of Balban, 'Alā-ud-Dīn Khiljī, the first three Tughluqs, and several provincial governors:

and independent rulers cannot be minimized. They paved the way for the greatness of the Great Mughals, and it was in the light of their experiments and on the foundation of their institutions that the latter were able to raise such splendid superstructures in the realm of administration. In one respect, moreover, the period preceding the Mughal Period may well be considered as superior to that which followed it: Whereas the former was the age of growth, vigour and vitality which bloomed into maturity in the fulness of time, the latter was one of decline and decay, carrying with it the germs of disintegration and demoralization, and its greatness and glory cannot be dissociated from the loss of vitality and vigour.

Before concluding this account we must remove one misunderstanding — that Muslim rule in India was a rule of foreigners.\* Was their rule in India a rule of foreigners? Right from the rise of the Sultānat down to the decline of the Badshāhat,

\* The view that Musalmāns are aliens — a view propagated by such communal organizations as the Mahāsabha — is equally false and frivolous. It must be remembered that with the exception of a few Semitic races, such as the Sayyads, Qureshīs, etc., the ancestors of a vast majority (9/10th) of Indian Muslims were Hindūs and hence Indians. They embraced Islām and left behind generations of Musalmāns who multiplied in numbers with the march of time. Change of religion does not imply change of nationality and a Hindū who embraces Islām to-day does

Muslim rulers can be regarded as foreigners only in the sense in which the English kings have been to England since the time of William the Conqueror. William went to England as a foreigner indeed, but he made that country his home and all his successors down to the present king are as much English as any Englishman can be. Or to make another comparison: Muslim Kings of India can be foreigners only in the sense in which all the Presidents of the United States of America have been owing to their foreign extraction. Or nearer home: they are foreigners like the Aryan rulers of India. They may be regarded as foreigners only in this sense and in no other. For Aibak, the first king of the Sultanat, and Bābar, the first king of the Bādshāhat, came from foreign lands no doubt; but, like the Aryan rulers of India, they adopted India as their own country, made her their permanent abode and completely identified themselves with her peoples, ruling her as Indian national kings and not as foreigners. Their successors, who were born in India, lived and died in India and

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not cease to be an Indian. Thus there can be no doubt that most of the Indian Muslims are Indian quite as much as Hindū Indians are. As regards the Sayyads and others who came from outside and permanently settled down in this country, it may be noted that they are Indian in the same sense as the Aryans who preceded them. From foreign lands they had come indeed, but foreign they certainly did not remain to the soil: They made India their home and completely identified themselves with her people and became Indian through and through.

thus they were Indian every inch. If they retained a distinctive stamp, it was mainly of religion, but that too was no bar to their being Indian. In spite of their religious differences, they ruled India as Indian national kings. Did the then inhabitants of India regard them as foreigners? Certainly not. They lived, felt and fought for the Empire shoulder to shoulder with their Muslim brethren and sacrificed their all for its stability. They even fought against their co-religionists of the South in defence of it. Does it not point to the presence of a nation in India? Does it not show that the Muslim Government was the national government of India? The fact that the proudest of Rajpūts took pride in giving away their daughters in marriage to Muslim kings speaks volumes. They would not have submitted to such alliances if they had regarded them as humiliating and had thought that they were giving away their daughters to foreigners. Proverbially proud of their valour and highly sensitive, having the greatest regard for their honour, they would have preferred death to such indignities if only they had regarded them so. The fact is that the Hindūs regarded themselves as free and not as slaves under the Muslim Kings. When they were admitted to all those powers and privileges which the sons of the ruling race enjoyed and were entrusted with the highest responsibilities, there was no reason why they should have regarded the Muslim Kings as foreign rulers. "Trust so noble evoked

loyal gratitude, political co-operation engendered a deeper social harmony, high responsibility preserved the haughty self-respect of a people conquered indeed but not disinherited or dishonoured in the conquest". During the Muslim Period the Hindūs and Muslims were merged into one nation in spite of their religious differences. Living together in peace and amity for centuries, subject to the same laws, enjoying same powers and privileges and occupying same positions and acknowledging allegiance to a common Motherland, the Hindūs and the Muslims were essentially one people under the Muslim Kings. The fusion of ideas and ideals and the fellowship of common rights and privileges found full expression in the daily life of the people, and the result was a new culture, a new art and a new outlook on life and letters, symbolizing a sympathetic understanding between the followers of two different faiths. The ties of mutual love and respect, which bound the brave Rājapūts to the Muslim throne were exceptionally strong and this is borne out by the fact that they fought for the Empire with a rare fidelity. The Hindūs and the Muslims, the Rājapūts and the Mughals all sank their sectarian differences and strived to serve the larger and nobler cause of a common Empire, a common Motherland and common Welfare, so much so that the Hindūs never hesitated to fight against the Hindūs in the interests of the Empire and the Muslims never shirked from fighting a Muslim enemy in

defence of their Motherland. Hindūs and Muslims offering a united front to Bābar at the First Battle of Pānīpat and fighting against a number of Hindū Rājas and Muslim Kings may be cited to illustrate this point.

FINIS

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